

COVERING THE BEST IN HORROR, SCI-FI & FANTASY ENTERTAINMENT

SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE

THE PHANTOM
UNMASKED!

GODZILLA
IN COMICS

THE LOST
SPIELBERG
FILM

ROBOCOP
THE SERIES

#1

\$6.95



CAPTAIN AMERICA
TRIBUTE TO THE FIRST AVENGER ON FILM
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS!



DREADITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of *Shadowland Magazine*! It certainly seems that the summer couldn't have been a better time to usher in our premiere issue. Summer 2011 is fast becoming one to remember in regards to horror, sci-fi, and fantasy films. Usually every summer has a decent share of tentpole flicks and franchise-fueled blockbusters – but *this* year has no shortage of them! *Thor*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*, *X-Men: First Class*, *Super 8*, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II*, *Cowboys and Aliens*, *Green Lantern*, *Captain America: The First Avenger*, *Conan The Barbarian*, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, *Final Destination 5*, *Fright Night*, *Apollo 18*, and *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* all have the potential to draw in the crowds. It's a great year to be a fan!

Now, a little about the magazine you're currently holding...one of the reasons that *Shadowland Magazine* came about was to offer like-minded fans a publication that wouldn't simply cater to one specific taste (i.e. classic horror, superheroes, modern sci-fi) but to encompass a bit of everything. In the varied realms of horror, sci-fi and fantasy, most fans have eclectic tastes while only a few (if any) have interests that are limited to just *one* subgenre. Thus, we intend on covering the best in *each* of the aforementioned genres!

If it touches upon horror, sci-fi and fantasy cinema, television, cartoons, comics, anime, literature or any other outlet of entertainment you can think of, you can be sure that it will be featured within these pages. There's nothing else to be said, so without further delay, I guide you through –

SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE

I promise you, there's no other magazine quite like it.

Andrew Parietti, Editor and Publisher
shadowlandmagazine@yahoo.com
www.shadowlandmagazine.com

P.S. We encourage readers to contact *Shadowland Magazine* with their thoughts, feedback, articles, and/or reviews. So don't hesitate, we want to hear from YOU!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover: An amazing artistic rendering of *The Phantom of the Opera* by Dwayne Pinkney. Read our interview with this very talented artist on page 24!

Contributors: Matt Richards, Ben Sommers, Flynn Cook, Chad Hauser, Chris Nelson, Mark Sasahara, Lisa Stilts, Stan Fuller, and Scott Clark. *Special thanks* to Rod Holcomb, Will Meugniot, and Dwayne Pinkney!

Disclaimer/Copyright Credits: The pictures & characters herein are depicted for critical review only, and are the Copyrights of their respective companies. No part of this publication may be reprinted in whole or in part without the publisher's written consent. Shadowland Magazine is Copyrighted by Shadowland Productions, Ltd.

CREATURE FEATURES

2 NEWS BITES

5 THE PHANTOM UNMASKED!

An exhaustive retrospective on the history of *The Phantom of the Opera* in film, television and literature.

18
GODZILLA IN COMICS: THE MARVEL YEARS
Toho's King of the Monsters in the Mighty Marvel Manner! A fond remembrance of Godzilla's comic adventures with S.H.I.E.L.D., the Fantastic Four, Devil Dinosaur, The Champions, and The Avengers.

22
THE LOST SPIELBERG FILM
In 1982 Steven Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* smashed box-office records, but it wasn't originally the film the renowned director set out to make. We examine the origins of Spielberg's child-friendly tale which was first scripted as a horrific sci-fi/thriller entitled: *Night Skies*.

24
INTERVIEW WITH DWAYNE PINKNEY
We talk with artist Dwayne Pinkney about his jaw-dropping artwork.

27
ROBOCOP: THE SERIES
Part man. Part machine. All cop. A look at the short-lived RoboCop TV series from 1994.

32
THE FIRST AVENGER ON FILM
Captain America may be Marvel's latest summer blockbuster, but what of his *other* on-screen adventures? A glimpse back at the Star-Spangled Avenger's 1944 cliffhanger serial, his cartoon appearances, two made-for-TV movies, and the '90s feature Marvel tried to hide.

39
INTERVIEW WITH ROD HOLCOMB
We revisit the 1979 *Captain America* film with director Rod Holcomb.

41
POSTER WARS
The theatrical posters of *Captain America: The First Avenger*.

42
INTERVIEW WITH WILL MEUGNIOT
Storyboard artist, writer, producer, and director, Will Meugniot talks to us about Marvel's attempt at a '90s *Captain America* animated series.

46
BEYOND FANTASTIQUE!

NEWS BITES

THE PHANTOM SPEAKS!

Fans of Lon Chaney's *Phantom of the Opera* will now have a chance to see the silent classic like it's never been seen before. Terror Inc. Films, in association with our own Shadowland Productions, will be releasing the horror masterpiece as a 'talkie' and in 3D! Chaney's film has had a long, tumultuous history (**Read *The Phantom Unmasked* article in this issue for the entire gruesome story - Editor**) including multiple re-writes and edits, to the point where the film as it stands today greatly differs from how it was originally intended to be seen back in 1925!

Terror Inc. Films has painstakingly reconstructed Chaney's *Phantom*, combining the best of the original 1925 version with the 1929 re-release in an effort to more faithfully adapt it to the original screenplay. In addition, the entire film now features an all-new dubbed dialogue track with sound effects and a new musical score.

This version, appropriately titled *The Angel of Music Edition*, will be available as a two-disc DVD set (one disc will feature the film in 3D and the other in 2D). Special features include a 'History of the Phantom' featurette, a slideshow of Phantom collectibles and memorabilia, a motion-comic featuring deleted scenes and the original unused ending, a *Phantom of the Opera*-themed cartoon-short, trailers, and more! This fantastic set includes two pairs of 3D glasses. These are the red-and-cyan anaglyph glasses, therefore the 3D can be seen on any television – no special TV required!

The Phantom of the Opera: Angel of Music Edition will be available on September 6th, 2011 exclusively through www.thephantomspooks.com and www.middleearthcollectibles.com

VASH BLASTS HIS WAY INTO NORTH AMERICA

North American anime fans have reason to rejoice - the Humanoid Typhoon is coming! Eleven Arts and FUNimation Entertainment are bringing the feature length follow-up film of the popular *Trigun* anime series, *Trigun: Badlands Rumble*, to the big screen in theaters across North America in Summer 2011.

The *Trigun* manga (manga = Japanese comic), created by Yoshihiro Naito, was first published back in 1995 before being adapted into a 26 episode series in 1998. The manga was translated into English and brought to North America in 2003, the same year the anime premiered on Cartoon Network's *Adult Swim* block. Taking place on a remote planet in the near future, *Trigun* follows the exploits of Vash the Stampede, a quirky, wandering gunman who always seems to run into trouble – often leading to mass destruction (so much so that he's known as the Humanoid Typhoon!). Continuity-wise, *Trigun: Badlands Rumble* takes place sometime before the end of the original anime series.

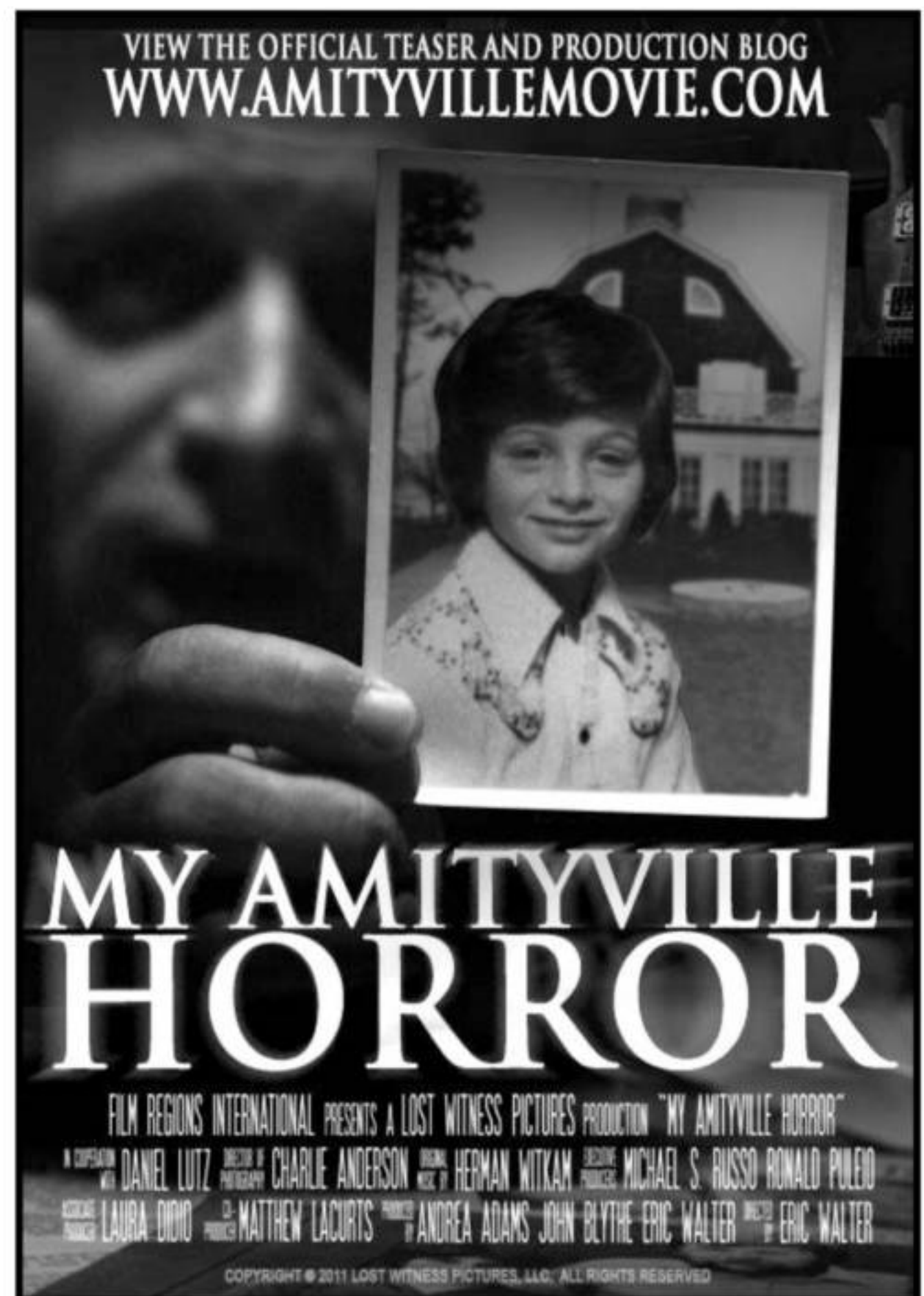
Considering the latest instances of anime showing up in North American theaters, one can assume that *Trigun: Badlands Rumble* will only be given a limited-release.

HORROR IN AMITYVILLE

It may have been thirty-four years ago when *The Amityville Horror* became a world-renowned best-selling novel, but the legend of the house on 112 Ocean Avenue lives on. Three decades later, details surrounding the Amityville case are still as hotly contested as ever.

Now, *My Amityville Horror*, a feature length documentary stands to provide a new perspective on what really transpired in that Long Island house all those years ago. The documentary will feature the first exclusive interview with Daniel Lutz, the eldest son of George and Kathleen Lutz (the owners of the house during the infamous haunting).

In addition, Miramax will be following-up their 2005 *Amityville Horror* remake starring Ryan Reynolds with a sequel currently titled *The Amityville Horror: The Lost Tapes*. A tentative January 27th, 2012 release date is scheduled.



AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

Marvel's mightiest heroes are joining forces in *The Avengers*. Directed by Joss Whedon (*Firefly*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), the film is set to begin filming in the Cleveland and Cincinnati areas. This is the first time a live-action feature will include such a heavy roster of superheroes. Confirmed to appear thus far are Captain America (Chris Evans), Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), the Hulk (Mark Ruffalo), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), the Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), and Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson). Tom Hiddleston will return as Loki, Thor's half-brother, from the Asgardian's title film.

Whether Ant-Man and the Wasp are going to appear has yet to be revealed, though some rumors insist that they *will* make it into the film. If they join the superhero team or will just be showcased in glorified cameos remains to be seen. A May 4th, 2012 release is scheduled.

TIM BURTON CASTS A DARK SHADOW

Tim Burton will soon be putting his spin on the classic '60s soap opera, *Dark Shadows*. Johnny Depp is set to sink his teeth into the role of Barnabas Collins, the reluctant vampire originally portrayed on television by Jonathan Frid. Joining the cast will be Michelle Pfeiffer, Eva Green, Helena Bonham Carter, Bella Heathcote, Chloe Moretz, and Jackie Earle Haley as Willie, Barnabas' unwilling servant. This will be the eighth film collaboration between Tim Burton and Johnny Depp (the first being 1991's *Edward Scissorhands*). A 2012 release date is expected.

GODZILLA RETURNS

Many found Tri-Star's 1998 *Godzilla* film too radical a departure from Toho's popular icon. Legendary



Pictures hopes not to repeat that mistake with their own Americanized version of the King of the Monsters. Gareth Edwards, director of the well-received indie film *Monsters*, and a self-reputed Godzilla fan, has signed on to direct.

THE DARK KNIGHT ON STAGE

Batman Live, a stage show starring the Dark Knight, will be making the rounds in the United Kingdom before heading over to North America during Summer 2012. *Batman Live* will showcase some of the most popular characters from the caped crusader's comic adventures, including: the Joker, Harley Quinn, Catwoman, the



Riddler, the Penguin, Poison Ivy, and the other half of the Dynamic Duo – Robin!

Aside from taking place within Gotham City, the live show will have sets resembling Wayne Manor, the Batcave, and the ever-popular Arkham Asylum. One can hope that *Batman Live* will escape the troubled production difficulties of Broadway's *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*.

THE FORCE IS STRONG WITH 3D

A galaxy far, far away will be getting much closer, at least in the way of depth-perception, on February 10th, 2012 when *Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace* hits theaters in 3D.

END OF LINE

Have a yearning to get 'back on the grid'? In Summer 2012 *Tron: Uprising*, an animated 10-episode mini-series, will be light-cycling its way onto television. Though plot details are still vague, it's been revealed that the story will take place between the original 1982 film and 2010's *Tron: Legacy*. Bruce Boxleitner, Lance Henriksen, Elijah Wood, and Paul Reubens will offer their voice talents.

JAPAN'S IRON MAN

Iron Man will be adjusting his repulsor rays to maximum when he arrives on the G4 television network late-2011. An anime version of Marvel's iron-suited hero premiered last October on Japan's Animax channel, spanning a 12 episode story arc produced by famed anime production company, Madhouse.

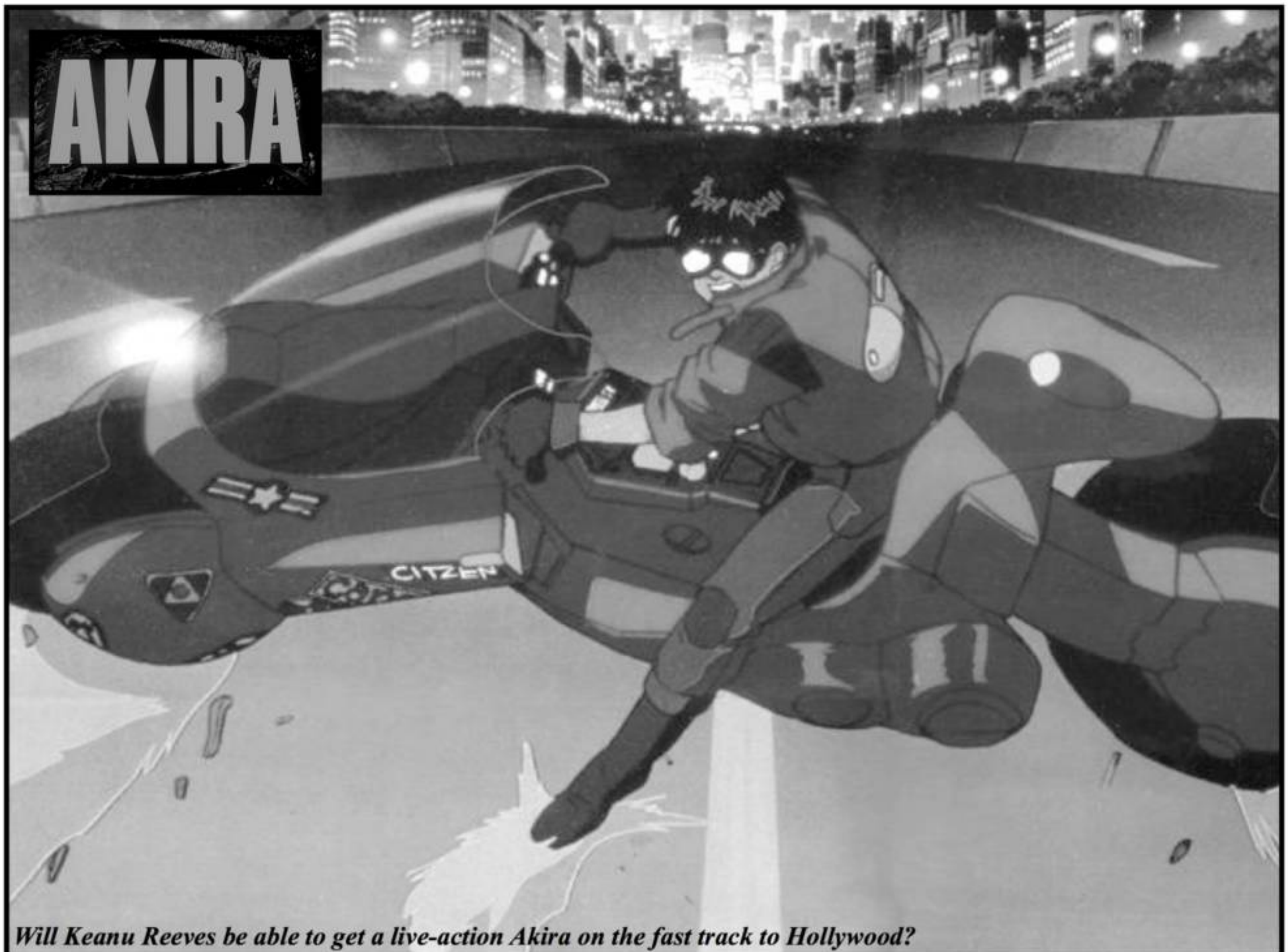
Following the success of *Iron Man*, Madhouse released *Wolverine* and *X-Men*. Likewise, both followed the same 12 episode structure. *Blade*, Marvel's famed vampire hunter, is currently in-line for his own anime series.

As for the American dub of Madhouse's *Iron Man*, Adrian Pasdar has signed on to voice the title character. Pasdar is best known for his role as Nathan Petrelli in *Heroes* and has voiced Hawkeye in *The Super Hero Squad Show* and Captain America in the 6-episode *Black Panther* animated series.

LIVE-ACTION AKIRA

Keanu Reeves has taken an interest in the upcoming live-action *Akira* remake. Reeves, a self-proclaimed anime fan, was also attached to produce and star in the now abandoned live-action *Cowboy Bebop* film. It's unclear how far negotiations have progressed, considering rumors of an *Akira* film have been circulating for years. All that's known at present is that Warner Brothers has partnered with Leonardo DiCaprio's Appian Way studio to produce the film.

Word is that Robert Pattinson, of *Twilight* fame, and Justin Timberlake are also up for roles, though which roles have yet to be disclosed. *Star Trek's* George Takei has taken issue with the lack of Asian actors in the proposed film and has gone on to encourage petitions against Warner Brothers' *Akira*.



Will Keanu Reeves be able to get a live-action Akira on the fast track to Hollywood?

THE PHANTOM UNMASKED!

A LOOK BACK AT THE PHANTOM'S MANY CINEMATIC FACES

The Phantom of the Opera, a story that has become so ingrained within the popular culture that it rivals the fame and prominence shared by other great literary works like *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. Similar to Bram Stoker's vampire and Mary Shelley's man-made monster, the Phantom has accomplished what only a select few literary characters have – remained relevant despite the changing times. What originally began as a novel written in the early 20th century has evolved into a venerable franchise that has lasted well over a century, with the unique ability to conquer nearly every form of modern entertainment including: film, television, musicals, cartoons, radio shows, and even comic books.

PHANTASTIC JOURNEY

Gaston Leroux was born on May 6th, 1868 in Paris. As a young man Leroux went to school in Normandy and graduated in 1889 with a degree in law. That same year, with the passing of his father, Leroux inherited a considerable sum of money. Out of boredom and an ever increasing aversion to the methods of the legal system, Leroux lived on his inheritance, quite lavishly by some accounts, and focused on his primary interest – writing. Over the next few years, Leroux honed his writing



Gaston Leroux

skills by working a variety of jobs, ranging from court reporter to theatre critic. He tried his hand as a journalist, quickly working his way up the ranks of the famed Paris newspaper, *Le Matin*, before being promoted to status of international reporter. He would go on to cover a variety of popular news stories including the Russian Revolution

in 1905, which earned him "Chevalier of the Legion of Honor" for his service to the press. One particular assignment, which will hold greater importance later, was Leroux's coverage of the newly built Paris Opera House. He made startling observations about the decrepit prison cells which bordered on torture chambers beneath the massive Opera House, where prisoners of war were once kept by the Paris Commune. Leroux learned that after the revolution many prisoners were forgotten about and were left in their cells to die. Years later, workers at the Opera

House claimed to see the prisoners' ghosts, while others maintained that some of the prisoners had indeed survived – but were driven mad by the years of isolation and subsequently roamed the lower catacombs, perhaps subsisting on rats and insects. Leroux had observed no ghosts on his trip, however, he did discover the bones of several ill-fated prisoners.

Leroux's excursion to the Paris Opera House would plant a seed within his psyche, but not one that would produce results until he changed professions. Much like his decision to turn away from a law career, Leroux gave up journalism in favor of pursuing another passion. By 1908, less than a year after leaving his award-winning, globe-trotting journalism career behind, Leroux published his mystery novel, *Le Mystere de la Chambre Jaune*, later to be translated as *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* in the United States. The novel was the first to feature one of Leroux's most famous characters, Joseph Rouletabille, a young journalist and amateur detective. It proved to be an instant success, spawning six more novels starring Rouletabille as the main character. At the time many considered Leroux's exuberant detective as the French's answer to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, whose adventures were then being published regularly.

The trip to the Paris Opera House several years earlier had never completely left Leroux's thoughts, for on September 23rd, 1909 the first chapter of *Le Fantome de l'Opera* was published in the popular French newspaper, *Le Gaulois*. The serialization of the novel that would soon be known to American readers as *The Phantom of the Opera* ended on January 8th 1910. By February, a novelized version was published. The first printing proved to be an exceptionally small run and suffered from disappointing sales. In 1911 *The Phantom of the Opera* was translated into English and published in both England and North America simultaneously. Leroux's novel proved to be more profitable in the United States, though its widespread success was severely hampered by another limited print run which, in turn, allowed the novel to quickly go out of print.

By 1918 *The Phantom of the Opera* was probably little more than a memory to many readers – perhaps even to Leroux himself, as he had published over a half-dozen novels since, many of which had garnered better sales than the story of a certain opera ghost had. Yet, in America, the spirit of Erik, the Phantom, lived on.



A GHOST OF A CHANCE

After *The Phantom of the Opera* was translated in English in 1911 the story may very well have ended there, had it not been for a young man in Hollywood. In 1918, Irving Thalberg was little more than a secretary to Carl Laemmle, the founder of Universal Studios. By 1920, Laemmle promoted Thalberg, only 21 years old at the time, to General Director of Universal City. The sudden promotion startled many who worked at Universal; even some of Laemmle's own family questioned the decision. Nevertheless, Laemmle had indissoluble faith in Thalberg. For one, Thalberg spoke Laemmle's language – he recognized the potential of utilizing actors in a way to make them recognizable 'stars' at a time when the Hollywood system was still relatively new. Further, Thalberg knew how to keep costs down and below budget, which pleased Laemmle more than anything. Coupled with his genuine talent and ability to pick the right projects to realize onto film, Thalberg quickly made a name for himself. Some argue that Thalberg was instrumental in single-handedly saving Universal from falling into a pit of chaos and keeping up with competition from MGM.

Thalberg eagerly sought to make the most of the 'star system', which he believed would increase film profits by familiarizing audiences with the 'faces on the screen'. Thalberg, the genius that he was, chose a man who had a *thousand* faces. By 1922 Lon Chaney had appeared in countless films, ranging from bit parts to starring roles. His pantomime techniques, skills partly attributed to his parents being deaf



and having to learn sign-language, and his revolutionary designs with make-up, singled Chaney out as Thalberg's first choice for Universal's upcoming film, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Thalberg and Chaney hit it off well, quickly earning each other's respect. In fact, Thalberg wielded such power at Universal that he worked out a considerable salary raise for Chaney and instilled the actor with creative control over certain aspects of the film, a benefit that was nearly unheard.

Laemmle had such trust in Thalberg that he let the young, newly promoted General Director control nearly every facet of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame's* production. Filming began in October of 1922 but, amidst an arduous shooting schedule, Thalberg had already begun to set the wheels in motion for Universal's next big cinematic spectacle. Years earlier, Thalberg had read a novel that combined all of the elements that he believed would make for a great film: mystery, romance, suspense, action, and horror. The novel, written by a French author, was titled, *The Phantom of the Opera*.

PHANTASMAGORIA!

Within the first week of filming *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Thalberg had commissioned the first draft of *The Phantom of the Opera* screenplay based on Leroux's novel – in addition to having the contract written for the film with Chaney planted as the star.

By 1923 *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* hit theaters and made a resounding impact with moviegoers, launching Chaney's career to new heights and firmly cementing him as one of the most popular silent film stars of the era.

Thalberg, on the other hand, was at wits end with Laemmle. Both men had developed a difference of opinion when it came to motion pictures. Laemmle strived for making quick films on the cheap that beheld ample profit, while Thalberg now wished to make films that held greater artistic value. Their debates turned to tense disagreements which soon escalated into all-out quarrels. This only added fuel to an already spreading fire. Thalberg felt that, for all his efforts, he was being withheld from the recognition he deserved for saving the studio and for his work on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (not to mention Laemmle's staunch position in avoiding giving Thalberg a raise).

In 1924 Thalberg left Universal to work for Louis B. Mayer Productions, which would later become known as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Thalberg didn't leave his former employer without a few parting gifts; he had already propelled *The Phantom of the Opera* far enough into pre-production that there was no going back – and when Thalberg drafted the original contract, he made sure to give Chaney complete control and final say over the title character's make-up, in addition to creative power over the project that previously dwarfed the actor's input on *Hunchback*.

Laemmle was infuriated with Thalberg, proclaiming: "That ungrateful little bastard is leaving me with a million dollar picture that has a misshapen freak as the main character!" Laemmle adamantly tried to find another 'safer' production as a replacement. One of Laemmle's chief concerns was the power that Chaney now held over *The Phantom*, especially when it came to the make-up. What ghastly visage would the 'man of a thousand faces' create? Would it be too shocking for audiences? It could turn the film into a potential flop!

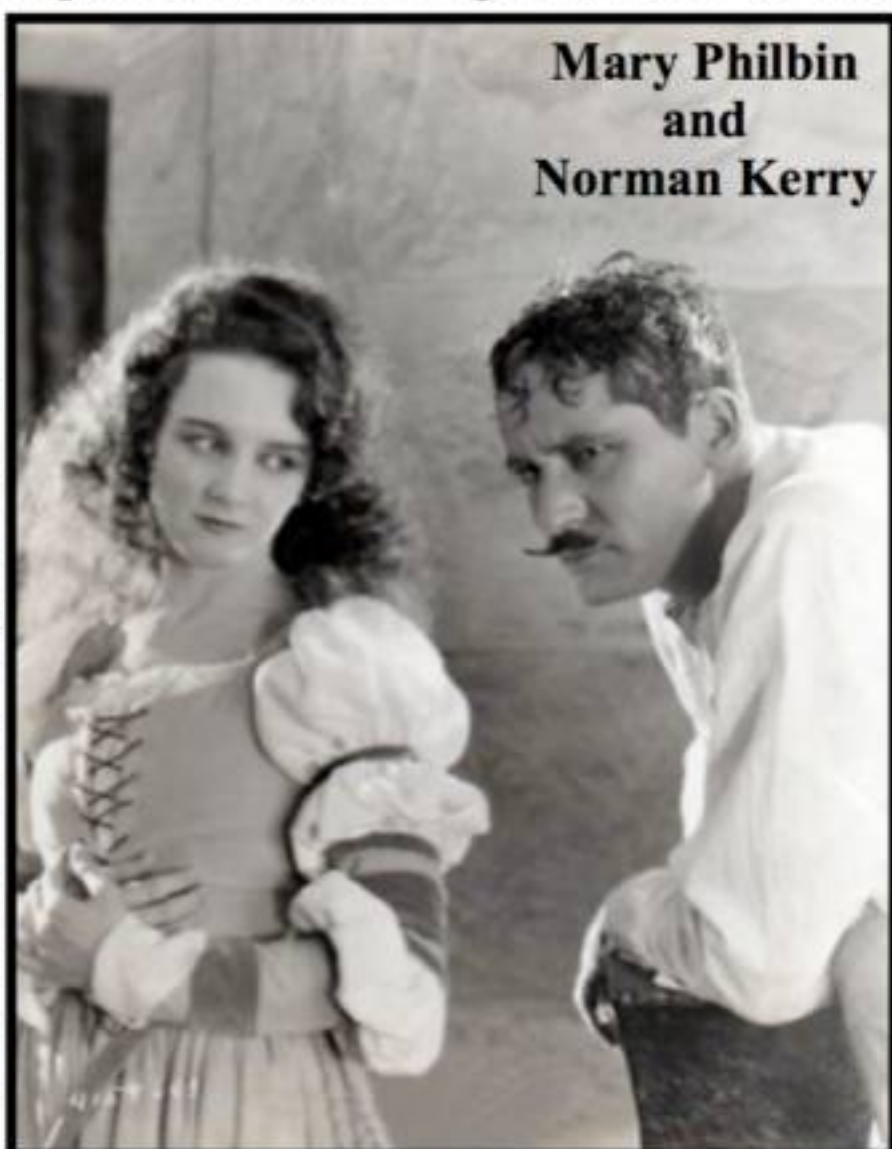
In a last ditch attempt to curtail *The Phantom*, Laemmle tried to produce an adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, *The Man Who Laughs*. A last minute issue concerning Universal's inability to secure the rights to the novel left Laemmle with only one dreaded option: begin production on *The Phantom of the Opera*.

A LON WAY TO GO

Initial production for *The Phantom* was anything but smooth. The first bone of contention became the hiring of Rupert Julian to helm the film. Julian originally began his career as an actor who had worked his way up to director. He exhibited both his acting and directing talents in 1918's *Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin*, a World War I propaganda picture that has since joined the unfortunate ranks of lost films.

Julian earned the directorial position on *Phantom* due, in large part, to his 1923 effort on Universal's *Merry-Go-Round*, in which he replaced renowned director, Erich von Stroheim. It was in *Merry-Go-Round* that Julian would work with two individuals who would follow him onto *The Phantom of the Opera* – actor Norman Kerry and actress Mary Philbin. Kerry was an up-and-coming star who had appeared in *Hunchback* and was becoming a serious box office draw in his own respect, while Philbin was relatively unknown at the time. Little did they know that they were about to embark upon the most recognized film of their careers.

While Erich von Stroheim was well-respected and considered a master filmmaker, Julian's reputation was lackluster at best. Many regarded him as a domineering tyrant on set – a trait which landed him at odds with Chaney early in production.



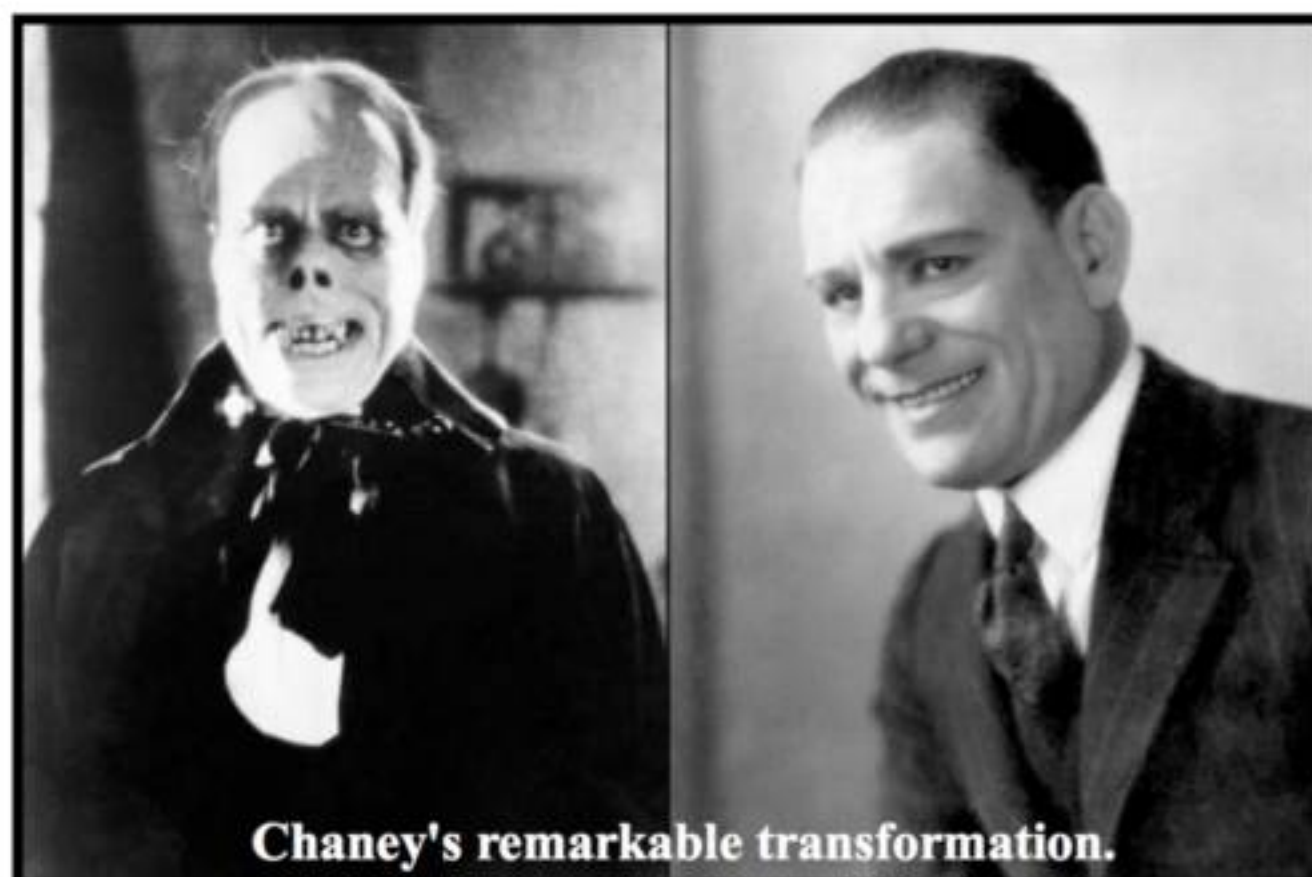
Tensions flared to the point where Chaney and Julian refused to speak to one another during filming. Norman Kerry even found himself quarrelling with Julian, as did much of the crew. This led to many disregarding the overbearing director's wishes. The director of photography and lighting crew would orchestrate scenes differently from what Julian called for and Chaney took it upon himself to direct some scenes personally, including the famous unmasking scene.

Laemmle, who favored making films on lesser budgets, was soon finding *The Phantom* to be anything but economical. While many of the costumes were reused from earlier Universal films, the sets were painstakingly constructed to resemble the actual Paris Opera House – which was no small, or inexpensive, feat. In addition, the use of two-strip Technicolor was going to be employed for several scenes, a process that cost three times the amount of developing standard black-and-white footage. One of the film's dramatic moments considered important enough to be captured in color was Chaney's unmasking scene.

To achieve the Phantom's monstrous visage as described in Leroux's novel, Chaney utilized groundbreaking make-up techniques to achieve his appearance. He used a skull-cap made of putty to give his head an elongated look, combined cotton and collodion to raise his cheekbones, applied ample greasepaint around his eyes to give his face a sullen, deathly image, and pulled up his nose with the use of wire. Chaney, the artistic craftsman that he was, would change the make-up ever so slightly depending on the scene. Due to well-placed camera shots and lighting, Chaney effectively transformed

his face into a living skull – an achievement that still captivates audiences over eighty years later.

It's worth noting that the application and wearing of the make-up was nothing short of physically painful; the false dentures alone would cause Chaney great discomfort. Nevertheless, he not only endured, but gave a performance that would go down as one of his best.



When it came time to film the unmasking scene in color, Chaney relented. The new lights needed to properly illuminate the set for colorized film were so hot that they would ruin Chaney's make-up within minutes. Having the influence that he did, Chaney vetoed the use of color when the Phantom was onscreen – a decision that must have delighted Laemmle, knowing that less money would be spent on costly Technicolor film development.

A FILM WITH A CURSE ON IT

By the end of 1924 filming had wrapped. After a rushed editing process the film was given a test screening less than a month later in January of 1925. Premiering in Los Angeles, *The Phantom of the Opera* was met with harsh criticism. While the audience commended Chaney, Kerry, and Philbin (some even claimed Julian's direction was fitting), a host of problems still bothered the viewers. The ending of the film was the main source of ire. In the original ending, Philbin's character, Christine, redeems Erik the Phantom with a kiss. Erik, having never felt a woman's love before, renounces his evil ways and – succumbing to his weak heart – dies upon his organ. The test audience felt cheated. How could such an abominable monster as the Phantom be redeemed by a single kiss? They felt Erik should have been a villain to the final reel. Unfortunately, that wasn't the only issue that plagued the film. A scene in which Christine visits a cemetery to pay respect to her deceased father was deemed too horrific for audiences of 1925. During the scene in question, while Christine visits her father's grave, the Phantom, masked in shadow, was to play his violin in the background. Raoul, Christine's childhood sweetheart, played by Norman Kerry, would intercede and chase the Phantom off. The scene ended with the Phantom hurling skulls and bones at Raoul to ward him away.

Another dilemma facing Julian's film was the lengthy running time and a pace that, in some scenes, dragged on longer than necessary. Even Laemmle, after



The deleted 'cemetery scene' deemed to frightening.



The original ending with Christine's kiss.

viewing the film, affirmed his own concern about the missing opera scenes that were to be shot in color, which he had already paid for. Julian contested the re-shoots Laemmle wanted, leading to the hiring of a replacement director. Enter Edward Sedgwick, a man who was known for his westerns and comedies. Infusing *The Phantom* with more action and some comedic undertones was *exactly* what the film needed, or so Laemmle thought. He had the script re-written and told Sedgwick to add in the new scenes.

By April of 1925 *The Phantom* was being tested with a new audience in San Francisco. What must have been a steady ascension of high hopes as the first reel began were soon shot down. While the ending now had an action-packed climax, the comedy scenes were misplaced and failed to match the film's otherwise serious-tone. Further, the characters were diluted, watered-down shadows of their former selves from the previous cut. The most significant of these changes was the mysterious Persian, played by Arthur Edmund Carewe. Originally, the Persian served as a foil to the Phantom, a man who knew Erik years earlier and who had spent the last so-many-years tracking him down. Now, the Persian was changed (in name only) to Ledoux, an inspector with the secret police. After the final reel faded to darkness and the house lights came up, the audience in attendance at the San Francisco screening, which included Chaney, was not at all pleased.

More grueling re-shoots followed and more editing continued until September of 1925 when *The Phantom of the Opera* was given its official premiere. Owing much to a costly publicity campaign that was seldom seen in that era, *The Phantom* became a box office sensation and Universal Studios made a fortune in profits.



EARLY SCREAMS

Contrary to popular belief, Chaney's *Phantom* was the second time the ghastly opera ghost from Leroux's novel made it to the silver screen. In 1916 Ernst Matray directed *Das Phantom der Oper* for German audiences. The film was made unbeknownst to Gaston Leroux, who contemplated suing the German filmmaker. Little became of Matray's adaptation and no known prints are believed to exist today. Check your attics and basements!

SILENT NO MORE

By 1929 silent films were fast becoming extinct due to the advent of the 'talkie'. No longer would patrons have to read inter-titles, but actually *hear* the actors utter their lines. While not every theater was yet equipped for sound film, it was quickly becoming the industry standard and spread across theater chains like wildfire. In an effort to once again cash in on *The Phantom of the Opera's* success, Universal had half of the 1925 film re-shot to incorporate actors speaking dialogue, while the remainder of the film would consist of synchronized sound effects and a music score. Although Norman Kerry and Mary Philbin returned to participate in the new scenes and to dub their voices, Chaney was already signed on with MGM and could not break his contract. Universal decided to leave the role of the Phantom silent, but used a voice-over for scenes where audiences see



only the Phantom's shadow. Universal claimed that the silhouette in question was, in fact, the Phantom's messenger (though it was quite obvious to be the contrary).

The sound re-issue of the film went on to do well at the box office, further cementing *The Phantom's* place amongst its silent film rivals. Unfortunately, the domestic sound release of Chaney's classic has been lost to the annals of time, in large part, due to the gross lack of care to preserve early cinematic works. However, the version of *The Phantom of the Opera* that is generally available on the commercial market today is an international-cut of the sound version from 1929 – and *not* the original 1925 version. While the sound disks of the 'talkie' *Phantom* have survived, albeit in rough shape, they do not match up with the international-print, as the sound disks were derived from the domestic version. Compounded with this, the initial cut of *The Phantom* with the original 'death-at-the-organ' ending and cemetery scenes have also been lost, making *The Phantom of the Opera* as it was originally intended, somewhat of a lost film in itself.

A COLOR SPOOKTACULAR

In Hollywood, if a film does well at the box office it can only mean one thing: a sequel or remake *must* be made. In an attempt to revive profits from the original *Phantom of the Opera*, Universal pushed a full-color remake into production. Riding high from their successful *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Mummy*, and *Wolf Man* films, Universal had hit a gold mine with frightening audiences. Knowing that they had stumbled upon a winning formula, by 1943 it was due time for one of their original silent terrors to return to the silver screen.

UNIVERSAL CONCEPT

Universal's foremost concern regarding the remake was how to update it for moviegoers of 1943. Many ideas were considered, including making it a comedy starring Abbott & Costello (a concept that pre-dated the comedy duo's first monster-mash up, *Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein*, by four years). It was settled that the film should adopt a more serious tone – but who would play the Phantom? Lon Chaney Jr. became a potential candidate, for obvious reasons. Ultimately, Universal settled on an actor who had starred with Chaney Jr. in the 1941 horror film, *The Wolf Man*. Claude Rains would play the opera ghost!

Arthur Lubin, director of many successful early Abbott & Costello films, was chosen to direct the color remake. Aside from the chandelier scene, the presence of the Phantom, and several characters' names, very little of the film resembled the 1925 original – not to mention it being a near-complete deviation from the Gaston Leroux novel. The Phantom, portrayed by the capable Claude Rains, was no longer named Erik. Instead he became Erique Claudin, a violinist at the Paris Opera House who is led to believe that his concerto was stolen. In a burst of rage, Claudin strangles the man he believes responsible for his stolen concerto, killing him – but not before getting



etching acid thrown into his face, horribly disfiguring him.

In Leroux's novel, the Phantom is born with his physical deformities. Though this is never clearly stated in the '25 version, it is heavily implied, particularly in the original screenplay (many of the scenes *were* filmed, but removed). Universal's decision to make the Phantom become disfigured due to an accident would be a recurring theme found in future remakes.

The Phantom's unmasking scene in the '25 version has stood the test of time, having become iconic in its own right; however, the unmasking scene in the '43 version comes much later in the film and, in comparison, is somewhat of a let down. A love triangle is also added into the mix, concerning a police inspector and a male opera singer who vie for Christine's affections. Sadly the inclusion of this dilutes the more twisted and interesting love triangle between Christine's lover, Raoul, and the Phantom, which was found in both Leroux's novel and Chaney's original film. There is a striking similarity between the '25 and '45 versions, nonetheless – though it was due to a cost-saving measure than for any artistic reason. Lubin's *Phantom* reused many of the same sets from the 1925 version, giving much of the film a startling resemblance to Chaney's.

Lubin, a comedy director, didn't fail to incorporate some light comedic scenes into the film, as well as several musical highlights. While Lubin's *Phantom* lacked many



The venerable Claude Rains as the Phantom.

traditional horror aspects, it did well at the box office upon being released in late August of 1943. The 1944 Academy Awards were especially kind to *The Phantom of the Opera*, nominating it for Best Musical Score and Best Sound Recording, while awarding it Oscars for Best Art Direction and Best Color Cinematography.

THE PHANTOM PLAYS THE SCAREWAVES

To coincide with Universal's 1943 *Phantom of the Opera*, a Lux Radio Broadcast was produced based on the film. The radio program ran just short of an hour and featured much of the film's cast reprising their roles, save for Claude Rains, who was unavailable. Basil Rathbone filled in as a replacement, lending his voice to the Phantom.

THE PHANTOM GOES TO ENGLAND

Universal was still eager to find out other ways to capitalize on *The Phantom's* success, this time by making a direct sequel. Claude Rains was unable to reprise his role and plans for the sequel fell through, leading to unused story ideas being integrated into the Boris Karloff film, *The Climax*, released in 1944. *The Climax* featured a plot very reminiscent of *The Phantom of the Opera* and once again reused the same *Phantom* sets from both the 1925 and 1943 versions.

Any hopes of seeing an updated version of *The Phantom* sat in limbo for well over a decade. By the late-1950s a new spark of interest in the opera ghost was ignited when a studio from England began revitalizing the cinema's most frightening monsters for a new generation. Within the span of a few short years, Hammer Films had resurrected Dracula, Frankenstein, the Mummy, Dr. Jekyll, and the Wolf Man in bloody color. Injecting these films with new life and more gratuitous helpings of violence and titillation than Universal was ever able to, Hammer quickly made a name for themselves and rose to the forefront of cinematic horror.

Hammer had announced *The Phantom of the Opera* as a film project as early as 1959, but actual production started in 1961. Selecting Terrence Fisher as



director gave Hammer a sense of security – after all, Howard was responsible for many of their horror successes, including *The Mummy*, *Brides of Dracula*, and *The Curse of the Werewolf*. Yet, another question remained: who would be Hammer's Phantom? Christopher Lee was considered before Hammer decided on Herbert Lom (who would later gain much fame in Blake Edward's *Pink Panther* films). The romantic lead was nearly played by Cary Grant before he dropped out of the project.

By late August of 1962, Hammer's *Phantom* was released, having gone over-budget to a considerable degree. The film's box office performance was dismal at best, damaging director Terrence Fisher's career for several years. The plot itself was even further removed from Leroux's novel than the '43 version. Characters names were again changed; the Phantom himself was once more disfigured due to a horrific accident and, most striking, was the location shift from the Paris Opera House to that of the London Opera House. While the film itself was lauded by many critics at the time, many praised Lom's sympathetic portrayal of the Phantom.



Herbert Lom's portrayal of the opera ghost.

BUENOS SCARIES

Back in 1960 a television mini-series was produced in Argentina of *The Phantom of the Opera*. The series was said to be one of the closest adaptations of Leroux's novel ever put to celluloid. Sadly, it now joins the hallowed ranks of lost films.

A ROCK N' ROLL PHANTASY

By the 1970s the horror genre had changed. Audiences were no longer content with just vampires, werewolves, and mummies. New spins on old concepts were the order of the day and even the Phantom found himself haunting more than just any old opera. Purging the classical trappings of Leroux's novel enabled director Brian De Palma to spin a new yarn for the Phantom's character, this time relocating the setting of the Paris Opera House to that of The Paradise – a concert hall run by corrupt music mogul, Swan, played by award-winning musician and actor Paul Williams.

William Finley, of *Sisters* and *Silent Rage* fame, portrays Winslow Leach, a composer and singer who has his music stolen by Swan. When Leach tries to get his music back he is framed for drug-peddling and sent to prison. After escaping, Leach makes one final attempt to

regain his music from Swan, only to be horribly deformed in an accident. Adopting a black leather costume, cape, and silver mask, he becomes the menacing *Phantom of the Paradise*.

1974's *Phantom of the Paradise* very loosely incorporates the basic plot and theme of Leroux's work with elements of *Faust* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. De Palma's film not only suffered at the box office but it failed to receive praise from many critics. Even so, it was nominated for a slew of awards including a Hugo for Best Dramatic Achievement, a Golden Globe for Best Original Score, a Golden Scroll for Best Horror Film, an Oscar for Best Score, and won the Grand Prize Award at the Avoriaz Fantastic Film Festival. Since its disastrous 1974 release, *Phantom of the Paradise* has gone on to become a cult film – and for good reason. It successfully combines horror, fantasy, dark humor, satire, and rock music to a genre that desperately needed a fresh jolt of material. Much like 1975's *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, De Palma's film was ahead of its time for mid-'70s audiences.



The Phantom of the Paradise.

**He's been maimed and framed,
beaten, robbed and mutilated.
But they still can't keep him
from the woman he loves.**



SONGS IN THE KEY OF TERROR

While *Phantom of the Paradise* will never be known for shattering box office records, it did make a reappearance of sorts in *The Hardy Boys/Nancy Drew Mysteries* television series that aired from 1977-1979. In an episode from the second season, *The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew meet Dracula*, Paul Williams arrives at a Dracula-themed party and sings, "The Hell of It", a song featured in *Phantom of the Paradise*. 'Phans' of the film who have seen the episode will be sure to notice that, at the end of the song, Williams puts false teeth in his mouth, resembling that of the Phantom's!



Paul Williams as Swan.

ANGEL OF MUSIC

By 1976 the Phantom found himself returning to his classical roots, though not in the form of a film but, rather, on the stage. Ken Hill, a British playwright, was the first to feature the opera ghost in a theater musical. Through the music of Mozart, Weber, Boito, and others, Hill fashioned a successful play that has been in-and-out of production for decades. As of this writing, the last performance of the Hill production took place in 2004 in Japan.

TELEVISION TERRORS

In 1983, longtime television director, Robert Markowitz helmed a *Phantom of the Opera* television special, featuring performances by Maximilian Schell (*A Bridge Too Far*, *The Black Hole*) as the Phantom, Jane Seymour (*Live and Let Die*, *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*) as the female lead, and Michael York (*Logan's Run*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*) as the romantic hero. The television film strayed far from the source material, replacing characters and plot details at every whim, even going so far as to move the story from Paris to the Budapest Opera House!

THE PHANTOM TAKES MANHATTAN

1986 was a strong year for the Phantom. It marked the premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* musical in the United Kingdom, arguably the playwright's most famous work to date. By 1988 the Phantom had made his way to Broadway where it became the longest running musical in the theater's history. Since then, Webber has written a sequel, *Love Never Dies*.

RE-ANIMATED SPECTERS

1988. The Phantom had haunted his way into almost every form of media known to exist. He chilled readers in Leroux's novel, thrilled them on the silent screen, dazzled them in vivid color more than once, starred in a rock opera, appeared on television, and was even featured in a musical that toured worldwide to high acclaim. What more was there to achieve for a misunderstood opera ghost?

The Phantom crept up from the dark chambers of the Paris Opera House once again, directed by television veterans Al Guest and Jean Mathieson, for an animated TV special. While the feature suffers from very stiff animation partially due to a tight budget and limited animation cells, even by 1988 standards, it also suffers from some questionable moments – like when the Phantom inexplicably kills a cat. Nevertheless, it remains truer to Leroux's work than many of the live-action versions. Entire lines of dialogue are liberally borrowed from Leroux's novel, which adds an intriguing flair to the film.



1988's animated Phantom.

A NIGHTMARE AT THE OPERA

Robert Englund may be best known for his portrayal of movie maniac and psychotic dream master Freddy Krueger in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, but the versatile actor also tried his hand (or glove) as the title character in Dwight H. Little's 1989 film, *The Phantom of the Opera*. Due to the box office draw of the slasher genre, populated by the *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*, and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* franchises, Little's version of the Phantom verged towards a gorier, more supernatural tone that abandoned aspects of Leroux's tale.



The famous 'chandelier crash' was discarded because of the high cost of implementing such a scene and the possible need for retakes. The film took place at the London Opera House, not unlike the Hammer Films 1963 effort. Along with the gory bloodletting, there were several other characteristics in Little's film that were as of yet unseen in any prior variation of *The Phantom*. The title character's meeting with a prostitute was a new twist, as was the reason for his disfigurement, caused by his 'pact with the Devil', a subplot partially resembling elements of *Phantom of the Paradise* and an underlying *Faust* theme.

On the other hand, Little's film was one of the few *Phantom* adaptations to feature the masquerade ball scene since the Lon Chaney silent version – not to mention it included a cemetery scene somewhat reminiscent of the one edited out of the 1925 adaptation.

Jill Schoelen (*The Stepfather*, *Popcorn*) portrayed Christine and Alex Hyde-White (*Biggles: Adventures in Time*, *Pretty Woman*) filled in for the male lead. The cast was joined by film veteran, Bill Nighy, who continues to lead an impressive acting-career today in both the *Underworld* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchises.

Little's *Phantom of the Opera* won a Brit Award for Best Soundtrack but was unable to appease the theater patrons of '89. By the end of the film's theatrical run the accumulated financial returns were less than four million dollars. It was considered a massive flop and plans to release a sequel, entitled, *The Phantom of New York*, were immediately scrapped. While a script for the proposed sequel had been written, it has since gone unproduced. However, in 1992, Greydon Clark's, *Dance Macabre*, also starring Robert Englund, was released – and while it has no real connection to Leroux's *Phantom*, it was re-titled *The Phantom of the Opera* in the Philippines.



Englund's take on the Phantom.

MINI-FEARIES

With the success of Andrew Lloyd Webber's play, *The Phantom of the Opera*, the popularity of Gaston Leroux's novel skyrocketed to unseen levels. Soon, everyone was scrambling to release their version of *The Phantom* in some way, shape, or form. Television would be the medium for the opera ghost in 1990, when Tony Richardson's mini-series hit the airwaves with mixed reviews. Starring Teri Polo (*Meet the Parents*, *The West Wing*) as Christine and Charles Dance (*Alien3*, *Last Action Hero*) as the Phantom, Richardson's version took many liberties, perhaps the most unusual was the inclusion of

the Phantom's father, played by Burt Lancaster in one of his final on-screen roles.

Richardson's television mini-series served as a stepping stone for *Phantom*, an off-Broadway musical that toured across America in the early '90s. While successful in its own right, *Phantom* never achieved the widespread success and critical acclaim that the Webber version achieved.

In 1991 the Phantom would return to television in Brazil with another mini-series, *O Fantasma da Opera*. This time, fittingly enough, the Phantom haunts the Municipal Theater in Rio de Janeiro.



Charles Dance in the 1990 *Phantom* mini-series.

CREEPY CONCERTO

In 1991 a musical stage-version of *The Phantom of the Opera* (not to be confused with the Hill and Webber versions) was filmed during a Florida performance and aired on television (later to be released on VHS). The musical took a comedic approach to the subject matter and played the Phantom off as more of a dastardly, unrepentant villain.

RATS!

1998 brought about one of the most bizarre and uncharacteristic versions of *The Phantom of the Opera* yet. Dario Argento, the Italian horror maestro responsible for such masterpieces as *Suspiria* and *Phenomena*, took a stab at Leroux's perennial character. The results were mixed. Very little traditional aspects of the story remain and, in essence, this is a *Phantom* film in name only. For starters, the Phantom, played by Julian Sands (*Warlock*), is not disfigured nor wears any mask. His insanity stems solely from being raised by rats beneath the Paris Opera House – in fact, the Phantom murders *only* when his pet rats are in danger, which puts him in quite a fix with his mortal enemy, Ignace, the rat-catcher.

Christine is played by Asia Argento (Dario Argento's daughter) who is contacted by the Phantom through means of telepathic communication. Needless to say, Argento's film is so far removed from Leroux's story that one questions why it was even titled *The Phantom of the Opera*.

HORROR ON THE STAGE

In 1991 yet another musical of the *Phantom of the Opera*, simply titled *Phantom*, was produced for the stage and premiered in Texas. An attempt to bring this version to Broadway was overshadowed by the much larger Andrew Lloyd Webber version. Still, *Phantom* toured the world to much success, culminating in over 1,000 productions.

MUSIC OF THE NIGHT

The Phantom resurfaced on the silver screen in 2004 with Joel Schumacher's version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical. Gerard Butler (*300*, *Gamer*) took on the role of the Phantom while Emmy Rossum (*Poseidon*, *Dragonball: Evolution*) portrayed Christine, and Patrick Wilson (*Hard Candy*, *Watchmen*) played Raoul. The film did well at the box office, though it received its fair share of varied reviews. Schumacher's film was nominated for a number of awards, winning several. Nominations included Academy Awards for Art Direction, Cinematography, and Music.



Emmy Rossum as Christine & Gerard Butler as the Phantom in the 2004 Schumacher version.

KISS MEETS THE PHANTOM

Paul Stanley, rock legend and lead singer of KISS, starred in a 1999 Toronto production of *The Phantom of the Opera*. Playing the title role, Stanley performed in the production from May 5th to August 1st and then resumed his role once more from September 30th to October 31st of the same year. Ironically, Paul Stanley and his fellow KISS band members starred in a 1978 made-for-television movie titled *KISS Meets the Phantom of the Park*, though it had nothing to do with Leroux's novel.

PHANTOM REAPPEARANCES

Just when you couldn't phantom the possibilities of the opera ghost reappearing, he returns! We've included a list of some lesser known appearances of the Phantom in other movies, television shows, cartoons, and novels.

FILMS

Spooks (1930) – Oswald the Rabbit short-cartoon featuring the Phantom. Though not a film in the traditional sense, back in the '30s cartoons would be played theatrically before, and sometimes after, the feature film.

Song at Midnight (1937) – Considered the first Chinese horror film. Directed by Ma-Xu Weibang. A loose adaptation of Gaston Leroux's novel about a disfigured Phantom-type named Song Danping. Weibang's film was followed by a sequel in 1941, a remake in 1962 titled, *Mid-Nightmare*, and yet another remake, *The Phantom Lover*, in 1995 directed by Ronny Yu. The original is held in high regard and, in 2005, was considered to be one of the best 100 Chinese films by the Hong Kong Film Awards.



Song at Midnight (1937)

The Phantom of 42nd Street (1945) – Low budget PRC (Producers Releasing Corporation) film that has little to do with an actual Phantom. Even so, it does feature a theater and a stage actor that is murdered on Broadway.

Man of a Thousand Faces (1957) – Biography of Lon Chaney with James Cagney in the lead role. Features a recreation of the Phantom's unmasking scene from the Chaney original. Oscar nominated for Best Screenplay.



Cagney portraying Chaney's Phantom in the 1957 film *Man of a Thousand Faces*.

Opera (1987) – A Dario Argento directed thriller about a murderer and an opera. Has some shades of Leroux's *Phantom*. A precursor to Argento's own version of *The Phantom of the Opera* in 1998.

TELEVISION

The Phantom of Hollywood (1974) – Made-for-TV film that originally aired on February 12th, 1974. Starring Jack Cassidy, Peter Lawford, and Jackie Coogan, the film's plot revolves around a series of murders occurring on the back lot of a Hollywood Studio. The culprit? A disfigured, vengeful actor who has been secretly living on the lot unbeknownst to anyone! Also known as *The Phantom of Lot 2*. This was one of the last films to be shot on the original MGM back lot.

The Hardy Boys/Nancy Drew Mysteries (1977-1979) – Second season two-part episode titled *Mystery of the Hollywood Phantom*. Plot centers around the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew attending a 'detective convention' where the detectives are being kidnapped by the mysterious Phantom. Aired October 2nd, 1977. Guest starring Casey Kasem.



The Munster's Revenge (1981) – Uncle Phantom of the Opera, resembling the Lon Chaney make-up, visits the Munsters in this made-for-television feature.

Count Duckula (1988-1993) – Count Duckula, Nanny, and Igor visit the Milan Opera House where they meet the Phantom of the Opera in the episode *A Fright at the Opera*. Episode was first televised on February 7th 1989.

Muppet Babies (1987-1990) – Clips from Lon Chaney's *Phantom* were often featured on Jim Henson's animated show, *Muppet Babies*. One episode in particular, *Sing a Song of Superheroes*, featured the Muppets' nanny attempting to watch the 1925 *Phantom of the Opera*.

Babar (1989-1991) – An animated children's show about the adventures of Babar, the elephant. In an episode appropriately titled, *The Phantom*, Babar encounters the opera ghost.

Goosebumps (1995) – The hit book series written by R.L. Stine. *Phantom of the Auditorium*, based on one of Stine's books, made it to television screens in the mid-'90s featuring a school play haunted by a Phantom character.

Wishbone (1995-1998) – Children's PBS show about a Jack Russell Terrier who imagines himself in various

literary adventures. In the episode, *Pantin' at the Opera*, Wishbone envisions himself in Leroux's novel.

Big Bad Beetleborgs (1996-1998) – Power Rangers-type show that featured a Phantom character resembling the Lon Chaney make-up. *The Phantom of Hillhurst* premiered March 27th 1997.

Baywatch (1989-2001) – Plot centers around a mysterious, disfigured man known as 'The Phantom Lifeguard' who lurks beneath the Malibu pier. The so-called 'phantom' develops an infatuation with C.J. (played by Pamela Anderson) and kidnaps her. *Nevermore* originally aired on May 12th 1997.

Are You Afraid of the Dark? (1999-2000) – A children's horror-anthology series. A deformed young man who haunts the local high school and lives in the basement falls in love with a young female violinist. *The Tale of the Last Dance* aired on May 21st 2000.

Phantom of the Megaplex (2000) – Disney Channel Original Movie about a ghost that haunts a megaplex. There is little to connect this made-for-television film to the original novel. The

Phantom is fairly harmless in this version, resorting to sabotaging the popcorn machine in favor of dropping a chandelier or murdering stagehands. Starring Mickey Rooney.



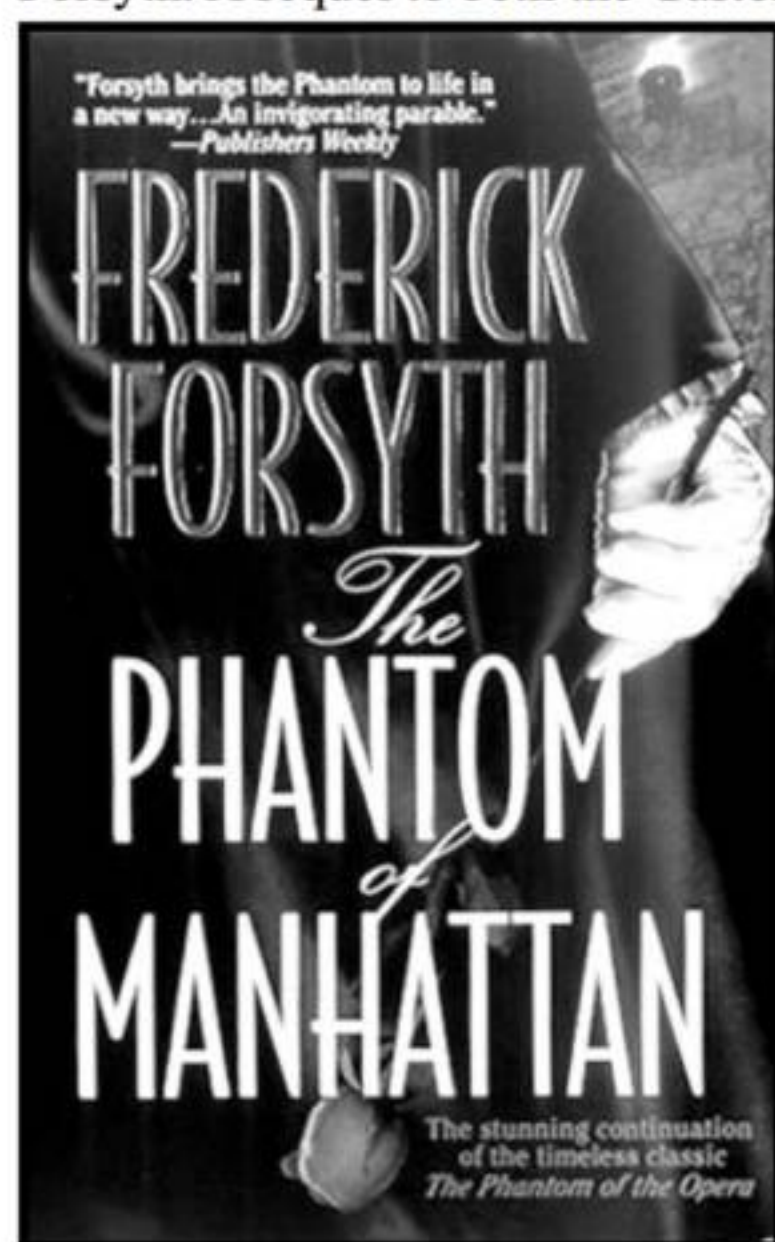
NOVELS

Phantom (1990) – Written by Susan Kay. Based on Gaston Leroux's novel, Kay creates a gripping retelling that alters several pivotal scenes from the original and greatly elaborates on the Phantom's early life spent in Persia.

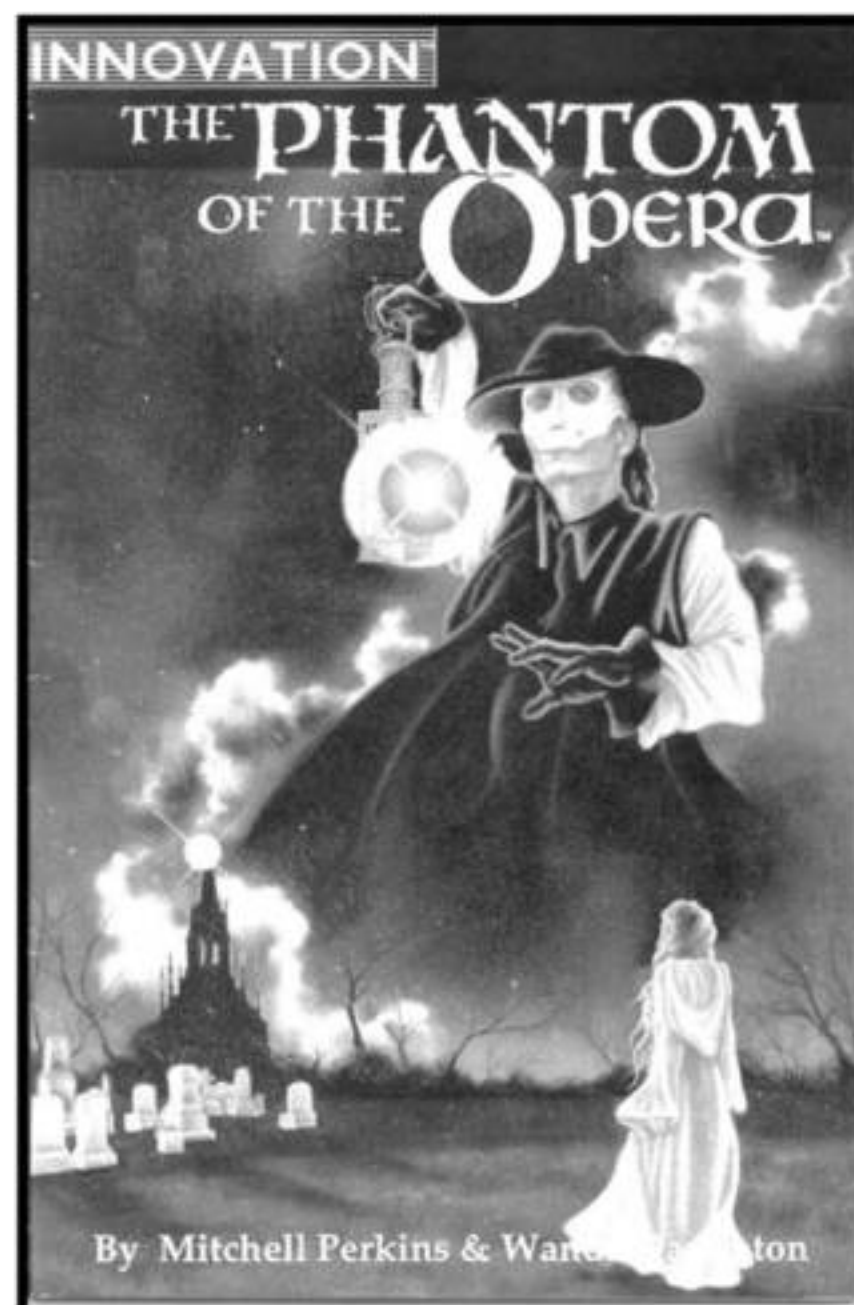


The Canary Trainer (1993) – Sherlock Holmes meets the Phantom of the Opera in this riveting novel by Nicholas Meyer (also known for directing *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* and *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*).

The Phantom of Manhattan (1999) – Written by Frederick Forsyth. A sequel to both the Gaston Leroux novel and



Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1986 musical. Forsyth treats much of Leroux's *Phantom* as misinterpreted facts (apparently unaware that Leroux's novel was fiction), spending a lengthy introduction disproving them and criticizing Leroux. Among many Phantom 'phans', *The Phantom of Manhattan* is a novel best left unread.



The Phantom of the Opera (1991) – A graphic novel by Mitchell Perkins and Wanda Daughton. Published by Innovation Comics. At the time, Innovation was also publishing adaptations of Anne Rice's *Vampire Lestat* series.

COMICS



1988 Eternity Comics adaptation.

The Phantom of the Opera (1988) – Published by Eternity Comics, this one-shot black-and-white issue stayed faithful to the original novel, sometimes following Leroux's work word-for-word. Eternity's *Phantom* comic begins at the masquerade, retelling prior events through flashbacks.



Sherlock Holmes: Adventure of the Opera Ghost (1994) – Similar to *The Canary Trainer*, this two-issue comic tells the story of Holmes matching wits against the Phantom. Published by Caliber Press.



Sherlock Holmes: Adventure of the Opera Ghost

Like the '88 Eternity Comics *Phantom of the Opera*, the issues were printed in black-and-white.

Le Fantome de l'Opera (1995) – Published by Asuka Comics DX, this 132 page Japanese manga retells the Phantom's story by combining elements of the Leroux original, the Chaney version, and the Andrew Lloyd Webber play. As of 2011 it has yet to be translated into English.

Tarzan: Le Monstre (1997) – Two literary icons do battle in an unlikely crossover! Edgar Rice Burrough's lord of the jungle takes on the



The Phantom manga

catacomb-dwelling Phantom in issue #11 and #12 of the Dark Horse comic series.



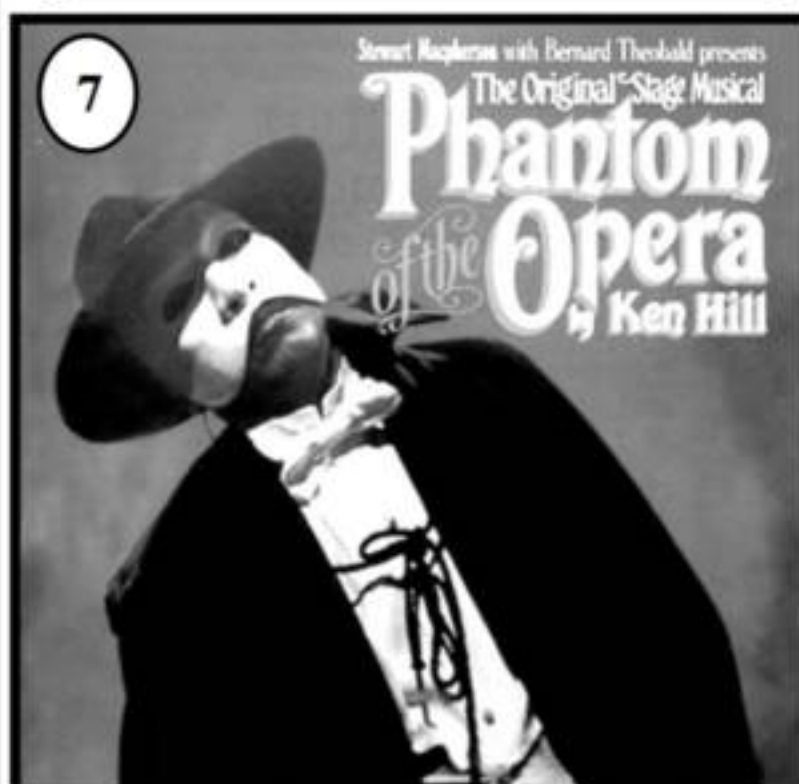
PHANTOM COLLECTIBLES



- (1) NECA *Phantom of the Opera* bobble head.
- (2) Remco 8-inch Phantom figure/doll.
- (3) The 1963 Phantom Aurora plastic model kit.
- (4) Sideshow Toys' limited edition 18-inch Phantom.
- (5) 1966 Don Post Phantom mask.
- (6) Glow-in-the-dark re-issue of Aurora's Phantom model kit.
- (7) Ken Hill *Phantom of the Opera* musical soundtrack.



- (8) Phantom limited edition life-size bust.



GODZILLA IN COMICS THE MARVEL YEARS

By Matt Richards

Godzilla is an icon known the world over, yet, even icons can have their slumps in popularity. The '70s were not kind to the King of the Monsters, at least, in his

native Japan. After years of many big screen adventures, Toho put their star attraction on hiatus following the low box-office returns of *Terror of Mechagodzilla* in 1975. It wouldn't be until 1984 before Toho rebooted the franchise with *The Return of Godzilla* (known as *Godzilla 1985* in North America).

Instead of remaining dormant for the better part of a decade, Godzilla would resurface in the United States to lend his likeness to a Hanna-Barbera cartoon, Mattel's Shogun Warriors toy line, and a title role in Marvel Comics' latest series.

OF GOD-ZILLAS AND MONSTERS

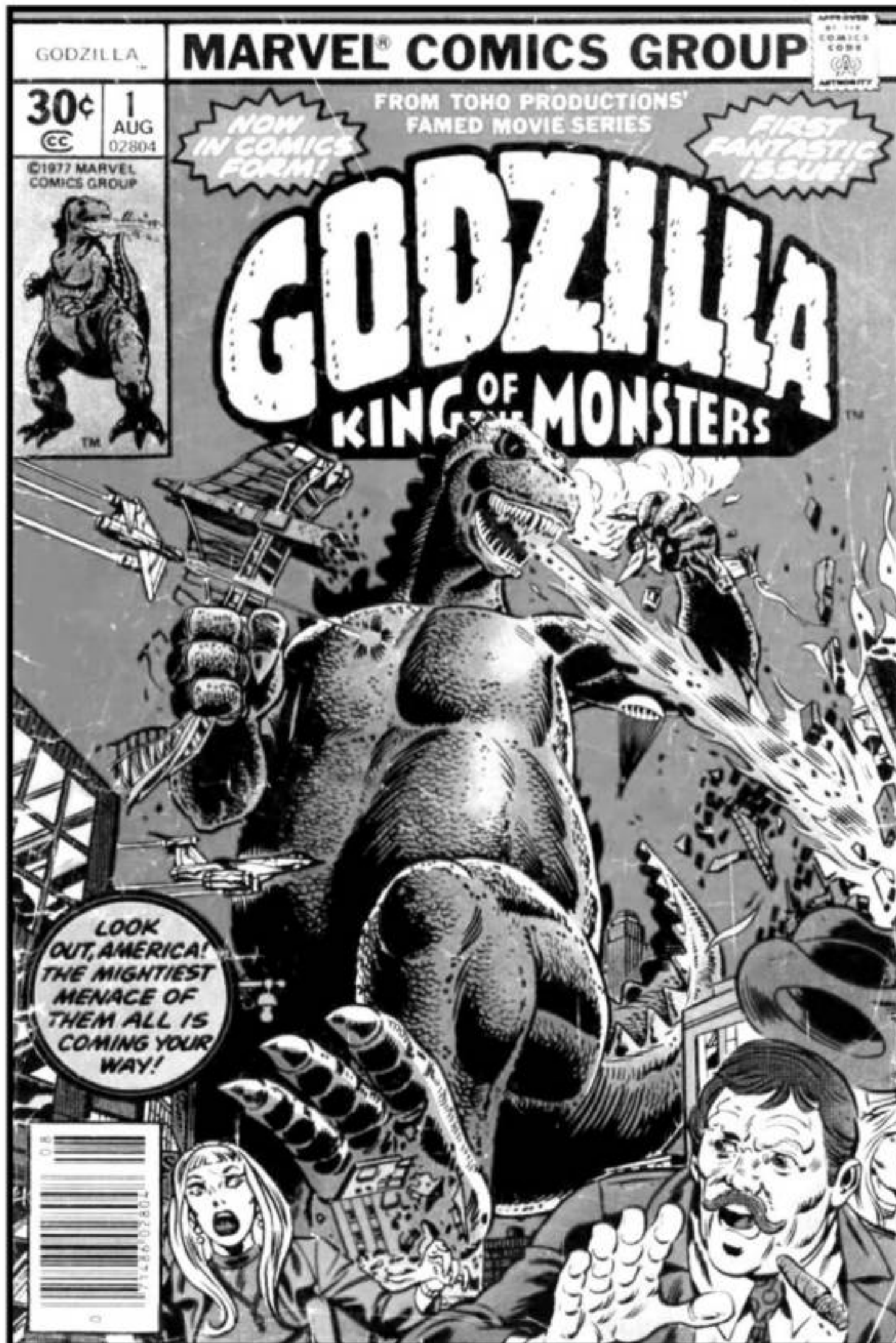
Godzilla's foray into the comic scene began in the late '70s. Someone at Marvel Comics must have decided that Godzilla would make a worthy comic book anti-hero

and, by 1977, the first issue of *Godzilla, King of the Monsters* hit the shelves. Having purchased the rights from Toho Studios, Marvel was given free reign to Godzilla, yet - due to a contract stipulation, they were unable to use any of Godzilla's monstrous on-screen foes. This seemed to suit Marvel fine as they not only incorporated monsters of their own design into the comics, but also had some of their top-tier and bottom-tier super heroes tangle with Toho's titan. In effect, this firmly planted Godzilla in the continuity of the 'Marvel Universe'.

The artwork was handled by Herb Trimpe, known for his work on nearly every major Marvel title, including *The Incredible Hulk*, *Captain America*, *The Fantastic*

Four, *Iron Man*, and *G.I. Joe*, among many others. Trimpe contributed his talents to every issue of the Godzilla series except for issues #4-5, in which Tom Sutton filled in. Doug Moench, who later worked on *Batman*, *Moon Knight*, and *Deathlok*, handled writing duties during the series' entire run.

Godzilla was certainly given ample treatment in the 'Mighty Marvel Manner'. For instance, in the first issue Japan's largest export was already confronting Marvel's premiere secret agent, Nick Fury, and S.H.I.E.L.D. (Supreme Headquarters, International Espionage, Law-Enforcement Division). From the ranks of S.H.I.E.L.D., the ornery Dum Dum Dugan (Nick Fury's long-time collaborator and frequently ally to Captain America) stepped in as commander of a special task-force assigned with the sole purpose of taking down Godzilla.



EAST MEETS WEST

Marvel's first issue introduced readers to the series' primary cast and to showcase Godzilla's incredible strength as he wipes out an entire S.H.I.E.L.D. unit. By the second issue he has it out with S.H.I.E.L.D.'s famed helicarrier and by issue #3 Godzilla tangles with The Champions - a group made up of Marvel's C-list heroes, such as the X-Men's Ice Man, the Angel, Hercules, and



the Black Widow. Ghost Rider was also part of The Champions in the late-'70s, however, he doesn't partake in the battle.

Issue three was a standout, solely for the inclusion of *one* panel. Near the end of the issue, after Godzilla has thoroughly ransacked San Francisco, the overgrown lizard attempts to step on

Hercules. As could be expected, Hercules doesn't take kindly to being pinned-down underfoot, so the muscle-bound demigod calls upon *all* of his strength to hurl Godzilla into the side of a building!

Once issue #8 came about, Godzilla was battling the likes of Red Ronin, a Shogun Warriors-type robot with an impressive array of weaponry. Red Ronin lasted several issues before being reduced to scrap metal in issue #14 when he was trounced by the Super-Beasts: gargantuan creatures sent to Earth to take over the planet for an evil alien race (not so much unlike the premise for many of Godzilla's cinematic escapades involving space monsters

akin to King Ghidorah, Gigan, Mechagodzilla and evil E.T.s like the Xilians, Kilaakians, and the black hole simians).

Adding a giant bigfoot into two-issues was one of Marvel's more interesting decisions.



Of course, the 'search for bigfoot' and outpouring of *Bogey Creek* documentary-style films were all the rage in the '70s, so Yetrigar - dubbed the 'biggest bigfoot of them all' was not such a stretch, considering the time period. Besides,

what more could kids want? *Godzilla and Bigfoot!* Not a bad deal for a measly thirty-five cents!!



DOWNSIZED

Later issues found Godzilla getting shrunk down in size due to a S.H.I.E.L.D. experiment. This led to Godzilla's



face off with a sewer rat beneath the streets of Manhattan. Ironically, the rat proved more challenging to defeat than some of the larger threats Godzilla had destroyed in previous issues.

Issue #20 brought along the Fantastic Four, propelling Godzilla into a life-or-death struggle with some



of Marvel's A-listers. At this point Godzilla was still much smaller in size, due to that aforementioned S.H.I.E.L.D. experiment. The issue features a great battle between Godzilla and the Thing before the green-powerhouse is sent reeling through some sort of 'dimensional time-machine'.



Transported through time, Godzilla lands in a Conan-esque era where he confronts Devil Dinosaur and Moonboy. By the way, for anyone who even *knows* the characters of Devil Dinosaur and Moonboy, you deserve a pat-on-the-back. Needless to say, Godzilla and Devil Dinosaur engage in combat before teaming-up (Marvel Team-Up anyone?) to take on a legion of prehistoric mutant-types.

Godzilla found himself back in present day New York City by issue #23, where he quickly went to town on the Big Apple. The Avengers, who were in the middle of a game of Monopoly (seriously!), find themselves locked in mortal combat against Japan's fire-breathing leviathan. If there's one issue to read in Marvel's run (though I recommend reading them all) issue #23 would be it.



Despite the Avengers' combined might they prove to be mere pests to Godzilla, save for Thor who manages to inflict a (very) minor injury to the behemoth. Yellowjacket and the Wasp do the most harm by flying into Godzilla's ear, upsetting his equilibrium and causing the beast to topple into the East River. Of course, he returns even angrier in issue #24.

Sadly, issues #23 and #24 were the last two issues of Marvel's Godzilla series, but it was one heck of a way to go out. Even J. Jonah Jameson makes an appearance and Spider-Man shows up for a gratuitous panel shot where he snaps a photo of Godzilla.





YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MONSTER DOWN

Godzilla did make an 'unofficial' return in *Iron Man* issues #193, #194, and #196, where a mutated-version of what is supposed to be Godzilla (by that time, Marvel lost the rights to using the character) makes an appearance. It's heavily implied that this is the same creature

from the former Marvel title, but it's not explicitly stated. Further bridging the connection in the *Iron Man* issues is an appearance from Dr. Demonicus, who first appeared in *Godzilla* issue #4. This mutated-Godzilla also made an abrupt appearance in *The Thing* #31, which featured a guest-spot by Devil Dinosaur.

Godzilla made another cameo in a Marvel Comics title (though again, not by name) in *The Amazing Spider-Man* #413, where the web-slinger fought a bunch of 'toys' that resembled not only Godzilla, but the likes of



Alien, Gumby, Stretch Armstrong, and Luke Skywalker (!). While Marvel's unofficial Godzilla would continue to appear off and on in various titles, Red Ronin made a re-appearance in *The Avengers* issues #197, #198, and #199.

Overall, Marvel's Godzilla series was closer in atmosphere to the light-hearted

kid-oriented fare of the late '60s/early '70s *Godzilla* films, although some character inconsistencies were still evident. For one, it's a popular misconception that Godzilla is green in the films. He's actually a charcoal-gray color, despite what they show on the movie posters. Furthermore, he emits an *atomic ray* from his mouth, not the dragon-like fire found in the comics or in Hanna-Barbera's 1977 cartoon series (he also shot *lasers* from his eyes in the cartoon, but we won't get into that).

In one issue of the Marvel series, Dum Dum Dugan calls Godzilla an 'over-sized iguana', which isn't far from the truth, at least in the way that Herb Trimpe draws him. Nevertheless, most fans of *Godzilla* can still appreciate much from Marvel Comic's *Godzilla* series, despite the somewhat considerable changes to the character.



The biggest disappointment with the Marvel Comic series lies with *one* major missed opportunity. Why didn't Godzilla ever battle Marvel's other green goliath?! The Incredible Hulk!



THE LOST SPIELBERG FILM

**E.T. May Have Phoned Home, But
He Almost Destroyed Ours First!**

By Ben Sommers

1977's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* proved to be a critical and financial success for director Steven Spielberg. When all was said and done, *Close Encounters* brought in over \$300 million worldwide. Naturally, Columbia Pictures wanted a sequel, *and fast*. Spielberg had no intention or desire to follow-up *Close Encounters*, but knew that Columbia could move forward on a sequel without him as Universal had already done with *Jaws 2*.

UNEARTHLY VISITATIONS

Spielberg, instead of pitching a proposed continuation to his blockbuster hit, drafted a treatment entitled *Watch the Skies*, loosely based on a true story documented by prominent UFOlogist, J. Allen Hynek. The supposedly factual account tells of a Kentucky family's farm that had come under siege by small aliens (which resembled gremlins, according to the family's description) in 1955.

John Sayles (screenwriter of 1978's *Piranha*) was chosen by Spielberg to rework his treatment into a full, fleshed-out screenplay. Sayles' initial script focused on a group of eleven malevolent aliens arriving on Earth, settling near a family's desolate farmhouse, and dissecting the nearby animals in search of any sentient creatures. Eventually the aliens direct their attention on the human occupants of the farm and terror ensues.

In order to give the aliens more screen-time and individual personalities, Sayles would later reduce the number of aliens in the film from eleven to six. The leader of the malicious extra-terrestrial gang would be the beak-mouthed, grasshopper-eyed, Skar. One of the early scenes would have depicted Skar killing off some of the family's farm animals by touching them with his index finger, which emitted a glowing light.

STALL FLOOR, ED'S POV

SKAR stands on the side of the carcass of a horse. The horse's viscera are exposed. Skar's claws are extended like a tiger's, tinged with blood. He looks up at Ed calmly-

CUT TO:



Another alien encountered by the terrified human family would be Squirt, an impish spaghetti-eating, food-loving member of the group.

KITCHEN

Gram finishes with the Saran Wrap, takes it to the pantry, opens the door-

GRAM
Aaaaak!

SQUIRT, the small, red-tinged ET we saw on the cow's back, stands there with sticks of uncooked spaghetti needling out of his mouth. Gram drops the cellophane, and Squirt opens his mouth to chatter, sending the spaghetti flying across the floor-

Among the other aliens was Buddee, a foil to Skar. Unlike Skar, who was intended to be the most vicious of the bunch, Buddee would be kindhearted and eventually go on to befriend the family's young autistic son, Jaybird. During the film's climax, Buddee was to rise up against Skar to defend his new human companion.

KNOLL, ET'S

Buddee retreats down the hill as the bigger, stronger Skar attacks, slashing. Black blood glistens from the cuts on Buddee's face-

After the battle, Skar and the remaining aliens would retreat back to their ship and leave Buddee behind.

CLOSER ENCOUNTERS

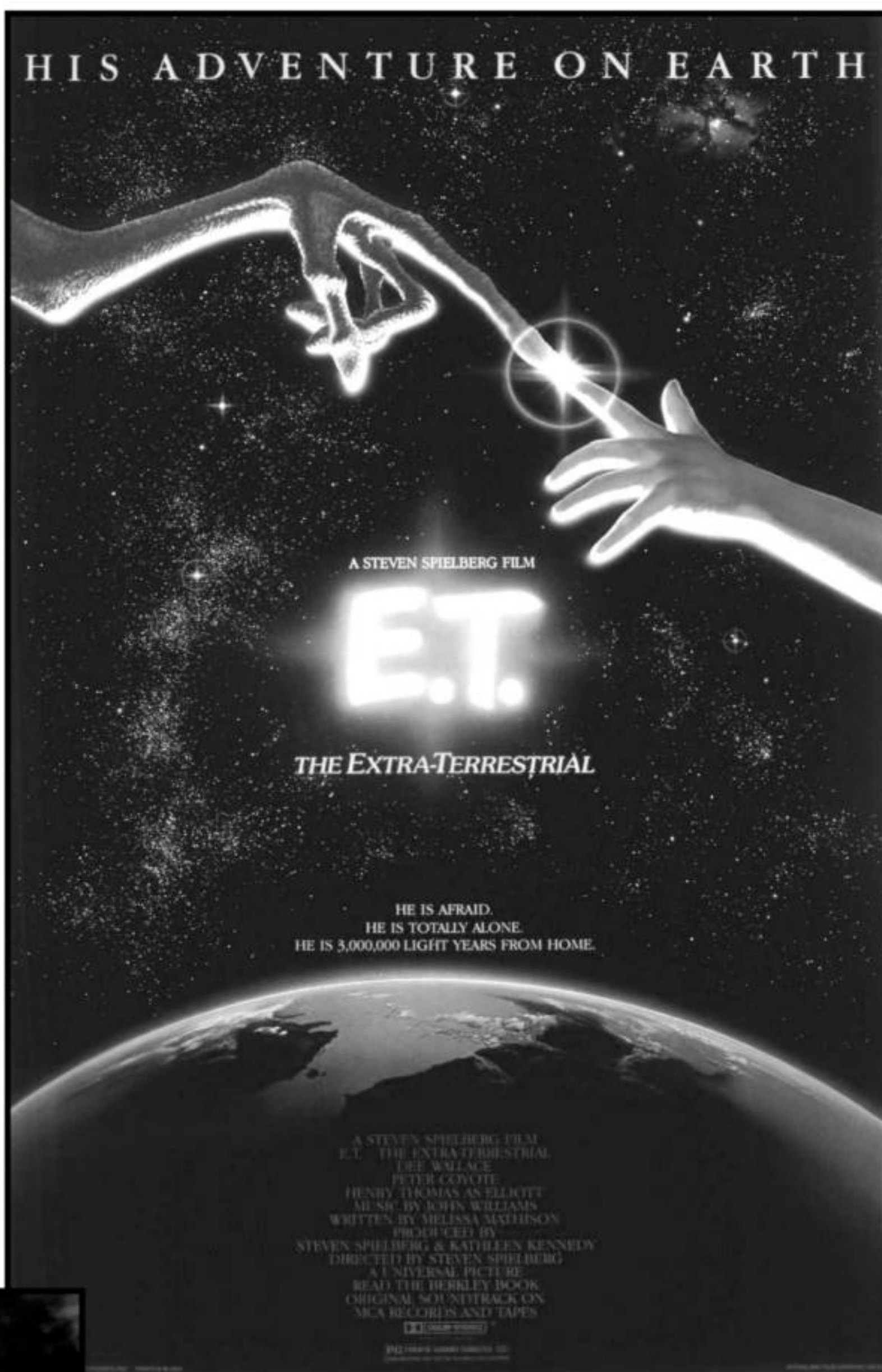
Watch the Skies, a title borrowed from the final line of dialogue in Howard Hawks' *The Thing from Another World*, was renamed *Night Skies*. To design the aliens, Spielberg enlisted special effects artist Rick Baker. Baker created the prototype for Skar at a cost of \$70,000. Spielberg was ecstatic with the test footage and told Baker to push ahead.

By the time Baker had developed scale models and detailed animatronics, over \$700,000 had been sunk into the project. It seemed like *Night Skies*, already well into pre-production, was going to happen. Spielberg had even selected Tobe Hooper (director of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*) to lend his directorial flair to the film. However, an unforeseen development would

change the outcome of *Night Skies* drastically. While still filming *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Spielberg decided to drop the project, feeling that he needed to return to the “tranquility and spirituality” of *Close Encounters*. At the time, Harrison Ford’s girlfriend, Melissa Mathison (who would later go on to marry Ford), read the script and found the subplot between Buddie, the benevolent alien, and the family’s autistic son to be the most intriguing aspect of the film.

Taking note, Spielberg set in motion a chain of events that would shift *Night Skies* away from stark, atmospheric horror and towards a much softer family-friendly tone. Upon hearing the news that the alien designs would have to be altered, Baker was furious. He refused to make the changes and had a falling out with Spielberg. Carlo Rambaldi was tasked with the new alien designs, an undertaking he already had experience with due to his work on *Close Encounters*.

What had started out as *Night Skies* would go on to become the catalyst for *E.T.* – the *Extra-Terrestrial*, which Spielberg decided to sit in the director’s chair for. Nevertheless, the legacy of *Night Skies* doesn’t end there. Hooper, who was to helm Spielberg’s alien-horror story, wasn’t completely out of a job. He was given the reigns on *Poltergeist*, a film (produced by Spielberg) that closely-mirrored the basis of *Night Skies*, replacing the vicious aliens with evil paranormal entities threatening a family. *Night Skies* would go on to inspire several similar-themed films as well. Joe Dante’s *Gremlins* (Spielberg filled in as executive producer) featured a race of mischievous creatures with Gizmo, being the only benign gremlin, developing a bond with the main character, a socially inept young man.



FUTURE CONTACT

While it’s unlikely that Spielberg will ever revisit *Night Skies* himself, it still seems that the award-winning director’s unmade film has been inspiring other filmmakers for decades. 1986’s *Critters* follows a plot similar to *Night Skies*, as does aspects of M. Night Shyamalan’s *Signs*. Even Spielberg’s own remake of *War of the Worlds* borrowed freely from certain scenes in Sayles’ script.

It was only fitting that after the success of *E.T.* a sequel was considered – a *darker* sequel that had parts of *Night Skies* sprinkled throughout, including E.T.’s human friend from the first film, Elliot, being visited by ‘bad’ aliens. The sequel was to be titled *E.T. 2: Nocturnal Fears*, though it only made it through to the first draft before being discarded. With nearly thirty-years since *E.T.’s* initial theatrical release, one is left to wonder if aspects of *Night Skies* have yet to reappear once again in some form or another.

INTERVIEW WITH DWAYNE PINKNEY

Basil Gogos. Bob Larkin. James Bama. Each are talented artists that have forever etched themselves into the hearts and minds of fans who fondly remember the covers of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, *Marvel Magazines*, and the Aurora model kit box art. Sadly, it seems that these artists' unique style, each one of their paintings arguably a masterpiece in its own right, has become somewhat of a lost form today. Or has it? Not if Dwayne Pinkney has anything to say about the subject! Mr. Pinkney is set to bring this 'lost art' back in force with his *own* jaw-dropping masterworks!

Shadowland Magazine: First off, we here at *Shadowland Magazine* find your artwork to be nothing short of breathtaking! Talent to achieve art of your caliber surely takes time and years of practice. When did you first start drawing and painting? Did you attend art school?

Dwayne Pinkney: Thank you very much for the compliment! I've always been interested in art, and actually wanted to be a comic book artist when I was a kid. I guess I've always had a natural ability to draw, but I didn't start painting til around 2000-2001 I think. My first efforts were really terrible. I'm actually kind of embarrassed by my early stuff. A lot of them I threw out. I tried both oils and watercolors, before finally settling on acrylics. Once I found the medium I liked, it was just practice, practice, practice. I have no formal training...I'm self taught through trial and error.

SM: It's certainly no exaggeration to say that your art harkens back to the days of Basil Gogos and James Bama, while maintaining a unique style all your own. Who are some of your favorite artists and influences?

DP: Well certainly the two guys you mentioned...both legendary! I once showed my art to Basil Gogos, and he told me to loosen up. He thought my style was too tight. I tried to paint like him, but couldn't do it. Every one I

tried looked sloppy to me, so I just went back to doing it my way, and I'm glad I did. It took me a while to realize I should stop trying to be another Basil Gogos, and start being an original Dwayne Pinkney.

SM: Concerning your artwork, what types of medium have you used (acrylic, oil, watercolor, etc)? Do you prefer one over the other?

DP: I've tried all three, and definitely prefer acrylics.

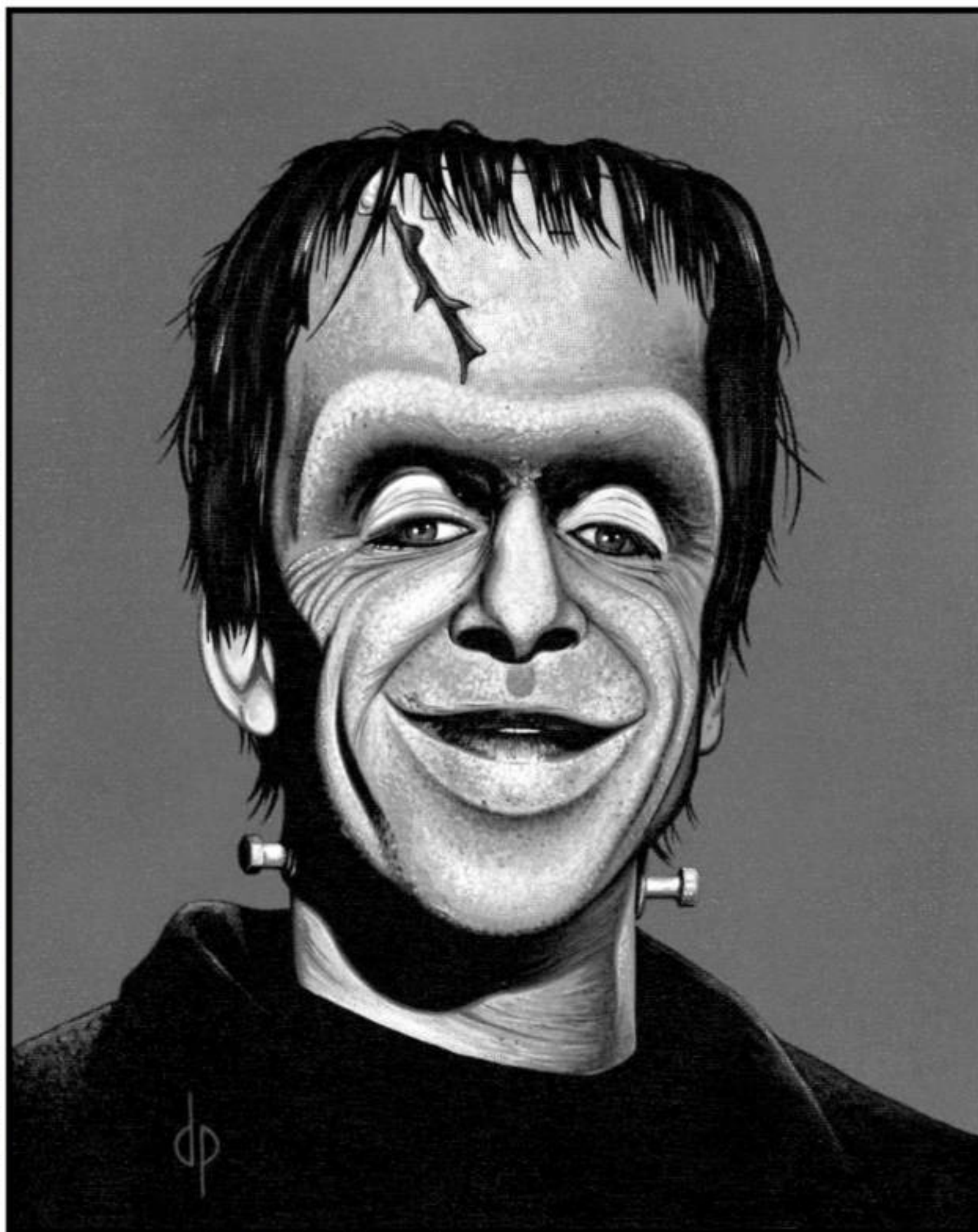
SM: Typically, how long does it take to finish a new painting?

DP: I've gotten it down to about 6-12 hours for a single painting. I usually paint 11x14...it's a nice size. Not too big or small.

SM: Clearly you are an admirer of the horror genre as you've recreated many of the classic Universal Monsters on canvas. What is your favorite horror film?

DP: Well as fate would have it...the Lon Chaney Phantom is my favorite. I have always been fascinated by that face.

SM: We hear that you're a fan of *The Incredible Hulk* and have quite the collection of memorabilia. Tell us a little about your collection and what are some of your most-cherished collectibles?



DP: Well, I've actually branched out quite a bit and now have a Marvel collection, not just a Hulk collection. My most cherished pieces are some of my Bowen statues, my 1976 Fleetwood Ghost Rider mint on unpunched card, and my Mego figures. I have some of each series, the eight inch, twelve inch, die-cast, and pocket heroes. Everything I have is either vintage 1970s or '70s inspired.

SM: Being Hulk fans ourselves, particularly of the Bill Bixby/Lou Ferrigno portrayal, what were your thoughts on the Ang Lee 2003 interpretation and the 2008 adaptation, starring Edward Norton?

DP: I liked them both, but not as much as the series. I still prefer a live Hulk to a CGI one, and I just didn't connect with either Banner. Bill Bixby really made you care about Banner. I think both Bana and Norton missed the mark slightly. But, they're both great popcorn flicks.

SM: As a comic book fan, do you have any favorite comic artists?

DP: John Romita Sr. is my hands down favorite. Growing up in the '70s his art was on everything. To me, he IS Marvel. I also really like John Byrne, Ross Andru, and Gil Kane. Jack Kirby of course...Steve Ditko, Sal Buscema, Gene Colan, Neal Adams.

SM: Earlier we mentioned James Bama, who was responsible for the stunning artwork on the original Aurora model kit boxes. Did you ever get into building and painting model kits?

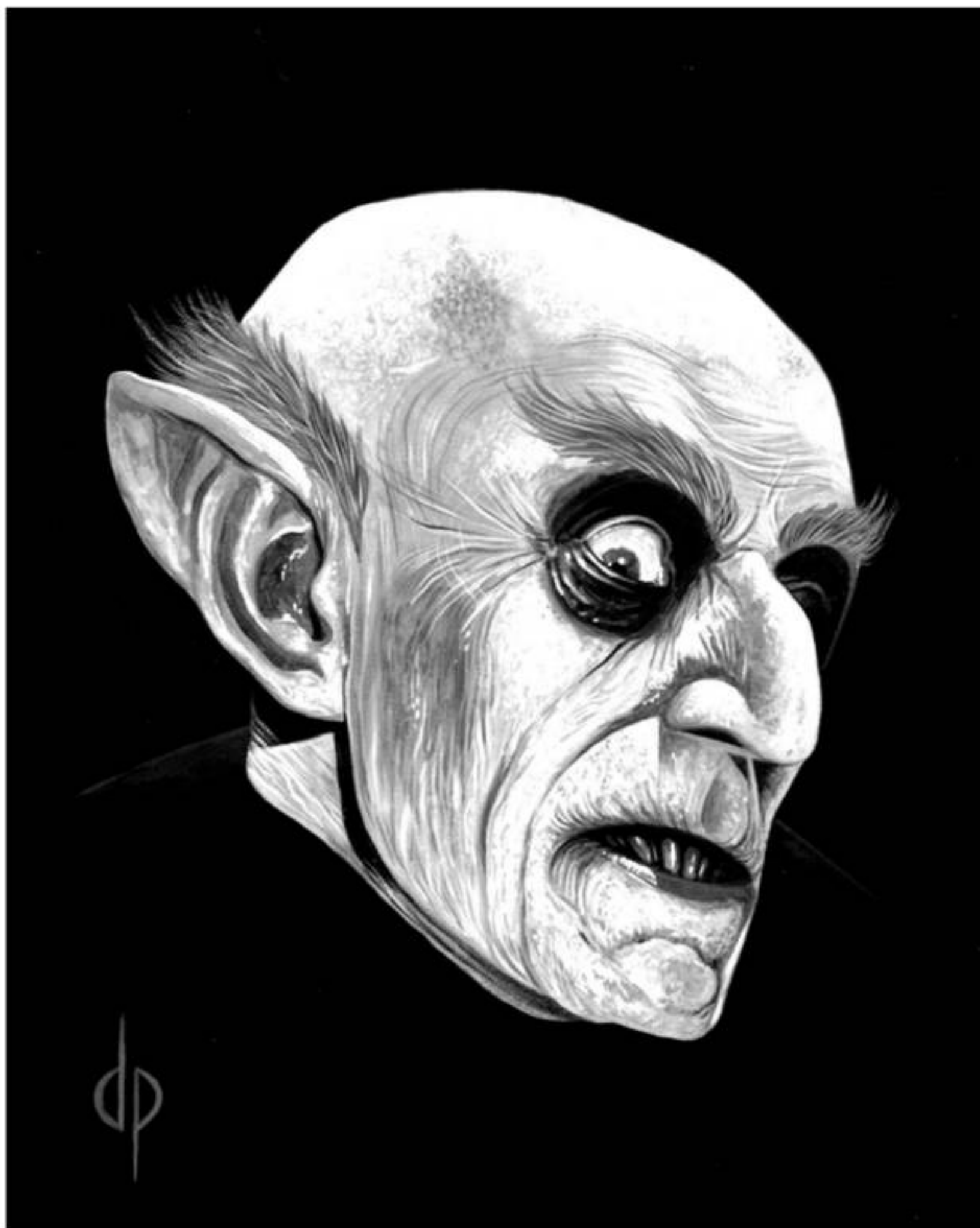
DP: Oh yeah! I've been building models longer than I've been painting. My favorites are Aurora monster and super-hero kits and Star Wars vehicles.

SM: We've seen your impressive Skeletor and Mer-Man artwork. Any plans to continue on with your *Masters of the Universe* series?

DP: Not at this time. Sadly, outside of the He-man fan community, there was virtually no interest in that series. I'm hoping *Masters of the Universe* comes back into the public eye with a movie, or a new cartoon or comic. Maybe then the demand will be there.

SM: You've attended the Monster Bash Convention in the past. Do you have any plans to attend this year?

DP: I'm going to try! I usually go every other year.



SM: Your spectacular *Phantom of the Opera* artwork, featured on the cover of this issue, is sure to awe any fan of the classic Chaney film. Where else has your art been seen?

DP: I did a cover called Hollywood 1939 for *Mature Focus* magazine back in 2007. Turned out it was selected by NAMPA (North American Magazine Publisher's Association) as that's years best cover illustration. I didn't find out til several months later. The award went to the magazine, but hey, I thought that was pretty cool! Most recently, I did a Nosferatu portrait for *Classic Images* magazine, and a model kit box for *Falcigno Art*.

SM: Years ago movie posters would feature striking art and, in some instances, producers would create poster artwork before their film was made, in an effort to pre-market the film to distributors. The Universal Monsters classics, the Grindhouse films of the '70s, even many of the '80s films like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Excalibur*, to name but a few, were all accompanied with detailed poster artwork – a practice that has nearly been abandoned today in favor of photoshopped images. It seems a shame that the use of artwork has been discarded. What are your thoughts on movie posters today in comparison to ones, say, from thirty years ago?

DP: I'm glad you asked this question. I am so tired of the 'floating head' type poster that has become the standard.

I'm in the movie poster business, managing vintage movie poster auctions for The Last Moving Picture Company, and we deal pretty much in material from 1920s through 1970s. The posters of '30s, '40s, and '50s were so beautiful, they are just a wonder to behold. Part of the problem is everything is done on computer these days. I don't even know how many traditional painters are out there anymore doing commercial work. That said, I am strongly opposed to digital art.

To me, it's not even real, as in it doesn't physically exist...it's just a file on a computer. I scan my artwork for purposes of being able to transfer images, but I still have a physical painting. I don't know if we'll ever see painted movie posters again, but I'm determined to keep my art where it belongs...on canvas!

SM: Are you currently selling prints of your art? Is there a way our readers can contact you online or through email?

DP: I do sell prints of my work, but in very small numbers, usually only 15-20 prints. At this time I'm sold out of everything, but if demand is there I will make future prints available in larger quantities. I am also available for commissions. I can be reached via email at Lastmo@aol.com.



Shadowland Magazine would like to thank Dwayne Pinkney for allowing us to interview him and for his fantastic rendering of The Phantom of the Opera for this issue's cover!

**VISIT SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE ONLINE AT
WWW.SHADOWLANDMAGAZINE.COM**

A LOOK BACK AT ROBOCOP THE SERIES

By Flynn Cook

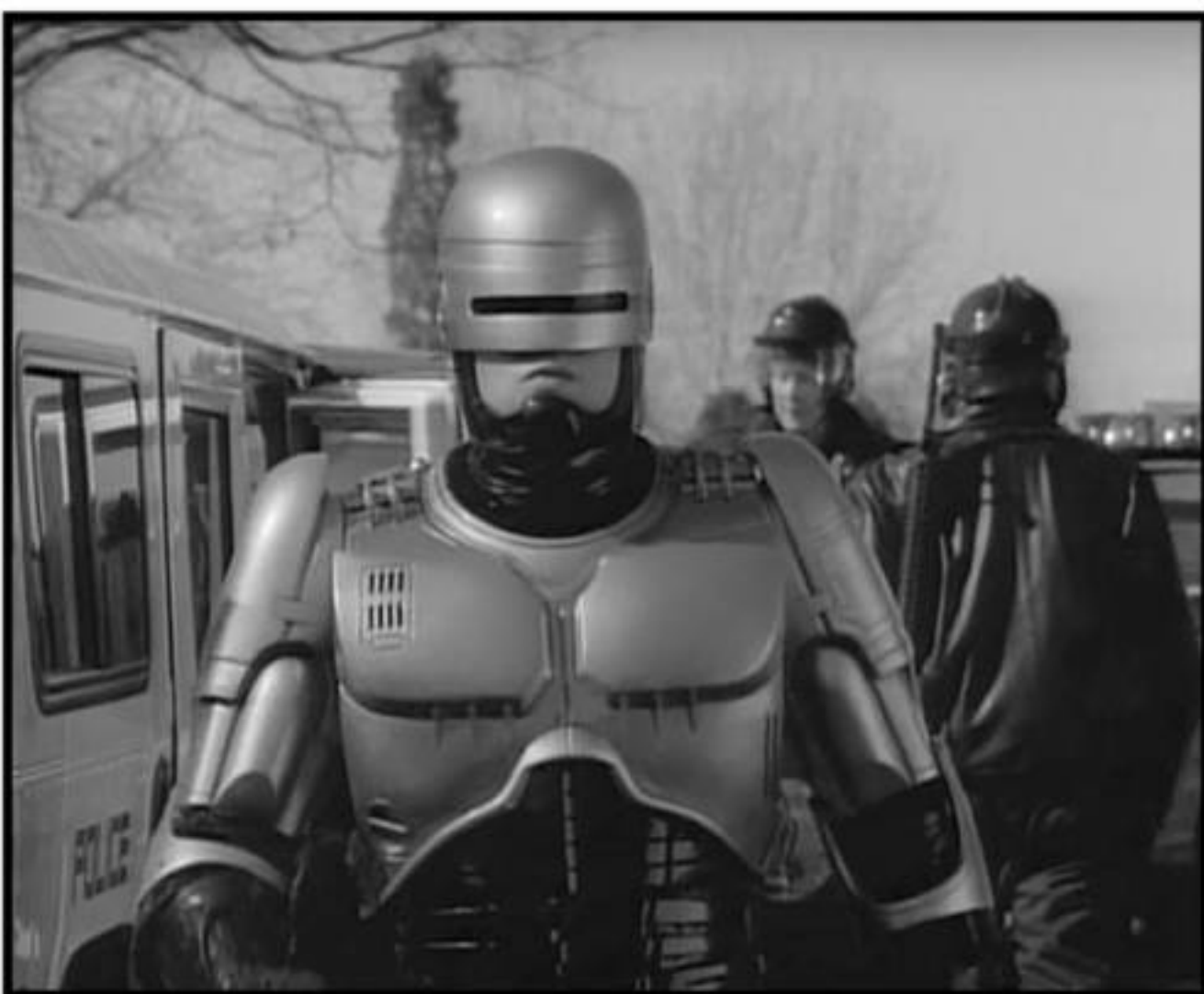
Many a movie franchise has been lucrative enough to attract a television audience. Take a look at the popular *Stargate: SG-1* and *Kung-Fu: The Legend Continues* for example, and all have added to the franchise's popularity. Some films have even spawned (or helped spawn) an animated series or two which are regarded in high respects, shows such as *The Real Ghostbusters* and *Batman: The Animated Series*, just to name a few. But there's one show that is often overlooked and typically downtrodden. It was launched at the most inappropriate time and added to the fall of its franchise, due to its perceived shortcomings. It had modest ratings and the highest of aspirations, dying before it could really start.

If you haven't gathered, we're talking about *RoboCop: The Series*.

Usually misunderstood for its attempted satire, and looked down upon by RoboCop fans for its lack of violence, the show receives less credit than it truly deserves. This retrospective will hopefully shed some light on the forgotten and underappreciated series, which given a good time slot, could have run for much longer.

DETROIT'S FINEST

The time was 1993. Orion Pictures (now a subdivision of MGM) and Skyvision Entertainment saw the terrible box office returns for the feature film *RoboCop 3*, and read the terrible reviews. However, MGM still saw promise in the Paul Verhoeven-started franchise, and hoped to try and bring RoboCop into the households of America



as a prime-time syndicated television series. MGM placed the blame for the failure of *RoboCop 3* on the screenwriter, famed comic book scribe Frank Miller, and thus decided that the cure for RoboCop's failure was to bring back the original screenwriters from the first film: Edward Neumeier and Michael Miner.

MGM commissioned Skyvision to produce 21 one-hour episodes of the show, and a two-hour pilot. Screenwriters Neumeier and Miner were asked to start the series off with a bang. Interestingly, the duo decided that this was their chance to resurrect their original script for the film *RoboCop 2*, (which had been rejected by Orion due to it being "too bizarre") and with a few edits, the script was re-written into the pilot for the RoboCop television series.

They essentially wrote out the two sequels that they didn't pen themselves, erasing the continuity established by Frank Miller. RoboCop has moved back to Metro South (as Murphy, he transferred from Metro South to Metro West at the beginning of *RoboCop*), Lewis is not his partner, and OCP never went out of business. The show continues the social satire established as a standard in the first film and we continue to see the all-informative "Media Break" news service. We see commercials for an extremely bizarre talk show called "What's On Your Mind?" (which discusses subjects such as the U.S. Military posing nude for charity) and instead of prison, criminals are put into the "Henry Ford Clinic for the Morally Challenged." Also present on television in RoboCop's world is the OCP superhero/advertisement "Commander Cash," who convinces citizens

to spend mass quantities of cash; he would also appear later as an adversary for RoboCop to tussle with.

I'd guess that Neumeier and Miner did not script the alternate for Lewis, Sergeant Reed, add the resident child, or bring Robo back to Metro South. It is quite possible that those aspects were changed by Skyvision to avoid copyright infringement on the non-essential characters, as if they only wanted to license RoboCop himself and OCP for the series.



The replacements, Detective Lisa Madigan and Sergeant Stan Parks, are essentially just Lewis and Reed with different names, though perhaps watered down. The OCP CEO, instead of being called 'The Old Man', was re-titled 'The Chairman'. The 'resident child' I mentioned, which was adopted by Sgt. Parks after the pilot, was named Gadget. She was allowed to roam freely throughout Metro South. Also, Ellen Murphy, RoboCop's wife, was renamed 'Nancy Murphy'.

NON-LETHAL FORCE ONLY

At the time, television violence had been severely cut back by the order of parents across the nation, due to the antics of the multi-colored *Power Rangers*. Thus, RoboCop was not allowed to follow in the path set by the first film. This is perhaps unfortunate, because RoboCop had always been meant to be an extreme concept, and the limitations of television at the time only further watered down the image of RoboCop in the wake of the reviled third film.

Due to the new limitations, RoboCop was only allowed to use his gun to place an electronic 'tag' on his

foes to track them later, or use it take a felon out of commission the long way; by shooting down something like a chest-of-drawers, to fall onto a criminal and incapacitate them. This gimped violence hits home for fans of the character, and unfortunately colors the appreciation for the show they should have.

The lowered violence was cause for the later writers of the series to re-visit RoboCop's other abilities, quite imaginatively. The series called for RoboCop to use his amazing strength, his voice/stress analyzer (which can detect lies), and his thermographic vision, which allows him to track heat signatures. Whereas the films played inside the box of "he has a cool gun," the series writers took advantage of the other inherent abilities that the character has, showcasing his potential more than the films did.



A side-effect of RoboCop's inability to kill was his only returning foe: William-Ray "Pudface" Morgan, a strange cross between a classic American gangster and Freddy Krueger's bad skin. This 'arch-enemy' appeared on the show several times, and I'll freely admit: he's a bit hammy. Morgan's awful face was revealed to be RoboCop's doing, and thus Pudface hates RoboCop dearly for his disfigurement.

The budget was quite good. Each episode could go as high 1.25 million USD to film. To go along with these lofty budgets, the writers gave viewers excellent scripts. Each episode was interesting, entertaining, and



with an hour run-time, there was plenty of room to perfect the pacing of each script.

The writing, above all else, was the true highlight of the show. As mentioned, Robo's abilities were creatively used, and the writers used those abilities to portray Murphy as something of a detective for the first time in the franchise. Each week viewers were presented with an interesting storyline, with a road of discovery for the character to follow. RoboCop is constantly found using his hand-based interface spike (which fans of the films will certainly remember), to upload and find clues. By the episode's end he always solved the mystery and had captured the perp. The writers also focused on Murphy's tortured soul; resulting, in true RoboCop fashion, in emotionally-charged scenes involving Murphy's former life, whether from old friends or family. Throughout the series, Madigan occasionally nags Robo to tell his wife and son about who he is, but each time, RoboCop responds with a resounding 'no'. The pilot ends with him saying: "They need a husband... and a father. I cannot be that. But I *can* protect them."

THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT



Both Peter Weller and Robert Burke refused to portray the cyborg policeman in the series. Therefore Skyvision was forced to cast a new RoboCop. With some training, the replacement, one Richard Eden, quickly became a fan favorite in the role. Eden intensely studied the performances of both Weller and Burke, soon becoming able to emulate them in appearance and behavior. Eden himself truly understood RoboCop, it seems; each step he took was measured, replicated precisely from the actors before him. Eden also understood the psychological aspect of RoboCop, always portraying him as emotionless and almost cold, with a touch of sadness. There is an errant wistful quality to him, which is perfect for the character.

The Chairman of OCP, instead of

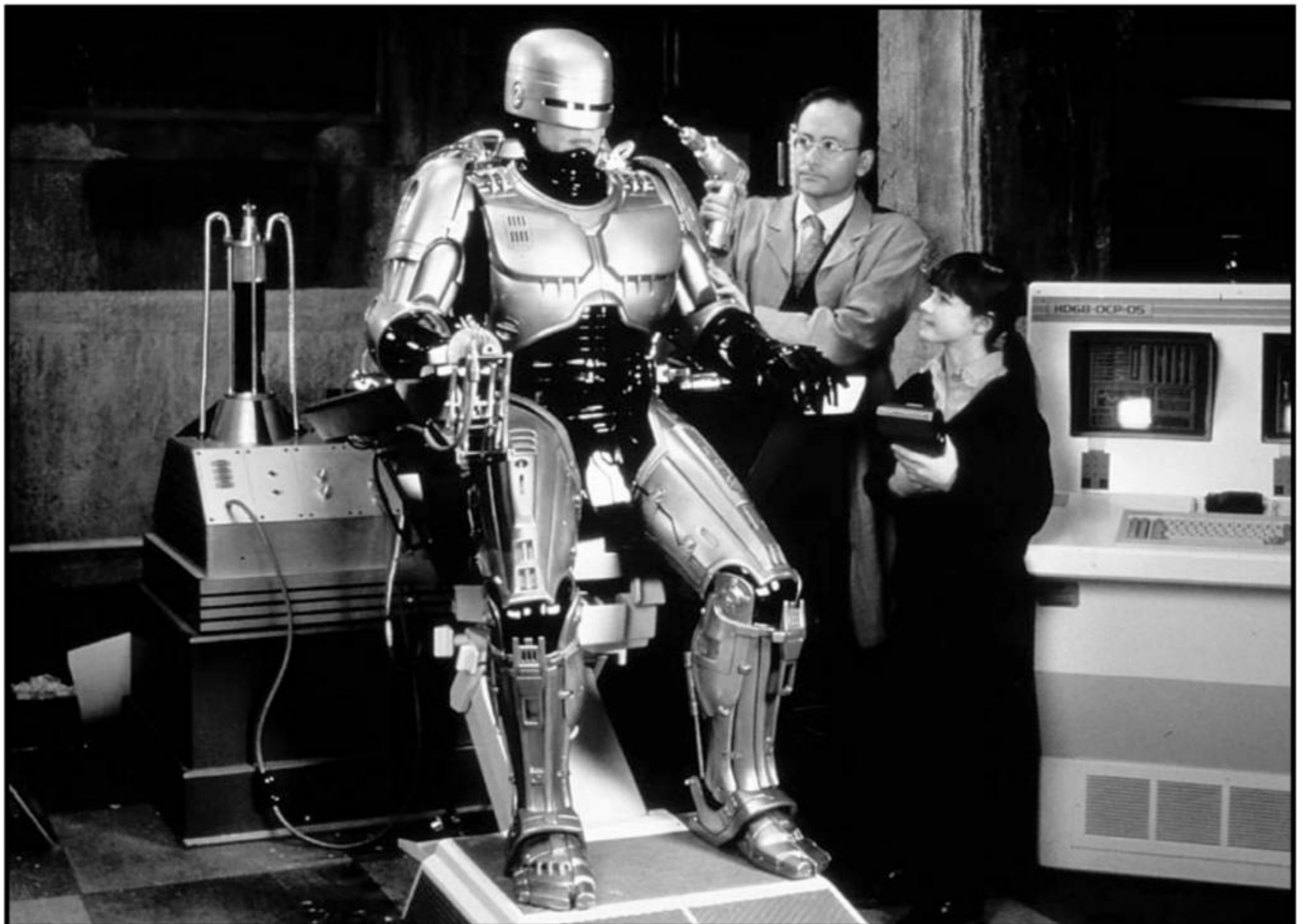


being evil as the sequel films established, was portrayed in the series as less unscrupulous and more reasonable. The Chairman is reasonably caring, though still a businessman. He even knows

RoboCop's true identity! Despite his businesslike manner he brings a subtle, friendly warmth to the show in his scenes. Yvette Niper portrays Madigan as someone equal to Lewis; just as tough and Robo's partner--half the time.



Another character which became a regular on the show was RoboCop's head technician, Charlie Lippencott. He was at-times comic relief, though never annoying. The pilot also introduced an ongoing character, ripped directly from Neumeier and Miner's original *RoboCop 2* script. Diana, an OCP secretary who, in the pilot, is killed by evil OCP execs and her brain is put into cyberspace as 'Neurobrain', runs Delta City. However, like RoboCop, there was a 'ghost in the machine' and she retained her mortal persona, becoming a friend to RoboCop, and perhaps a kindred spirit as well. She appears to characters of the show as a projected hologram of her former self.



Of course, this editorial/retrospective wouldn't be very good if I didn't mention a couple of the best episodes.

The Human Factor is a fan favorite which pits RoboCop and Murphy's father, a former cop himself, against a spider-themed criminal hell-bent on destroying OCP, one who had been captured by Murphy's father before his retirement. There is an excellent, errant drama to the pairing of father and son, and in a later episode the two cross paths again, resulting in the revelation of Robo's identity.

Prime Suspect, based on the RoboCop comic book mini-series from the time, sees RoboCop framed for the murder of a crooked televangelist, and results in RoboCop being hunted down when he refuses to be arrested. How do you frame RoboCop, you ask? Why, you simply make yourself a copy of RoboCop's gun and dispose of it, seeing as RoboCop is the only one that can fire his own gun.

Here's an admission for the cynical. Was the show a bit cheesy? At times, sure. Many action shows of the time were. However, as a



big fan of the character and the franchise, I can attest that it all comes down to how willing you are to really pay attention. If you can look past the occasional silliness and the usual cynical way you might view pop culture, you will find that it's something of a hidden gem. It's pure to the source. RoboCop was always about more than *just* violence.

Although the show had many great things going for it, it failed to out-perform its competition. So with its high budgets, the powers-that-be decided it wasn't worth continuing. The programming for the show was terrible; most didn't know about it and it was put in on the worst time slots. I recall that it was broadcast at seemingly random times!

By now, the show has made its way onto DVD in



most regions. I suggest it for everyone who never saw it, and for those who did to give the show a second try.

-Thank you for your co-operation. Stay out of trouble.



RoboCop: The Series
Action Figures

CAPTAIN AMERICA

THE FIRST AVENGER ON FILM

By Chad Hauser



While Marvel Comics has no shortage of popular heroes, few can compare to the enduring appeal of their patriotic shield-wielding luminary, Captain America. Created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, the iconic red, white, and blue crime-fighter first appeared in the pages of *Captain America Comics* #1 during March of 1941. The premiere issue featured one of the star-spangled hero's most recognizable covers – Captain America punching Adolf Hitler square in the jaw. Though it

would still be close to a year before America officially entered World War II, readers became enamored with this new costumed character. The first issue nearly sold one million copies, a record breaking number at that time.



Captain America Comics issues #1, #2, & #7



A TIMELY HERO

Timely Comics, which would later go on to become Atlas Comics (which, in turn, would evolve into Marvel Comics) knew that they had a hit on their hands with Simon and Kirby's creation. The first run of the title made it to issue #75 (cover-dated September 1950), though the last issue, by then called *Captain America's Weird Tales*, didn't even feature the title hero, but had turned towards a horror/suspense anthology format.

Prior to 1950, Captain America's popularity was such that he appeared in a wide-variety of other titles aside from his own, including *All Select Comics*, *USA Comics*, *Marvel Mystery Comics*, and even went on to lead one of the first superhero teams in comic history, the All-Winners Squad, in the appropriately titled, *All Winners Comics*.

Captain America would briefly return in the 1950s as a 'commie-smasher' – though it would later be revealed that this Captain

was an imposter. The original Captain America returned to action in March 1964, in issue #4 of *The Avengers*, where the newly-formed superhero team uncovered Cap's body frozen in suspended animation. The rest is history. From then on, Captain America has become one of Marvel Comics' top tier superheroes and one of their bestselling titles.



HERO OF A THOUSAND THRILLS!

Between the '30s and '40s the only way comic heroes would generally make it to the silver screen were in film serials, otherwise known as cliffhangers. The typical serial would have its storyline spread out over twelve-to-fifteen 'chapters' with each chapter lasting around fifteen

minutes (each one would end abruptly with the hero in some sort of peril, hence the reason for calling them cliffhangers). These serials were often made on the cheap and would be shown in conjunction with a feature film. Notable comic-to-film serial adaptations were *Flash Gordon* (1936), *Dick Tracy* (1937), *Adventures of Captain Marvel* (1941), *Spy Smasher* (1942), *Batman* (1943), and *Superman* (1948).

In 1944, Republic Pictures bought the rights from Timely Comics to use Captain America in a fifteen-chapter serial. What followed was a very loose translation of the character and any real similarities were purely in name alone. In the comics, Captain America was really Steve Rogers – a scrawny, frail young man physically unable to have enlisted in the U.S. army during World War II. That is, until he is chosen for a top secret military program. After being given the Super-Soldier Serum (say that five times fast), Rogers is endowed with enhanced strength, endurance, and agility that push the limits of human potential.

Armed with an indestructible shield and aided by his young sidekick, Bucky, Cap fought against Nazis, the Japanese, and any rogue group threatening the Allied Forces. His most notorious and recognizable foe would become the Red Skull, a sinister villain personally chosen by Hitler to represent and carry out the Nazi ideals.

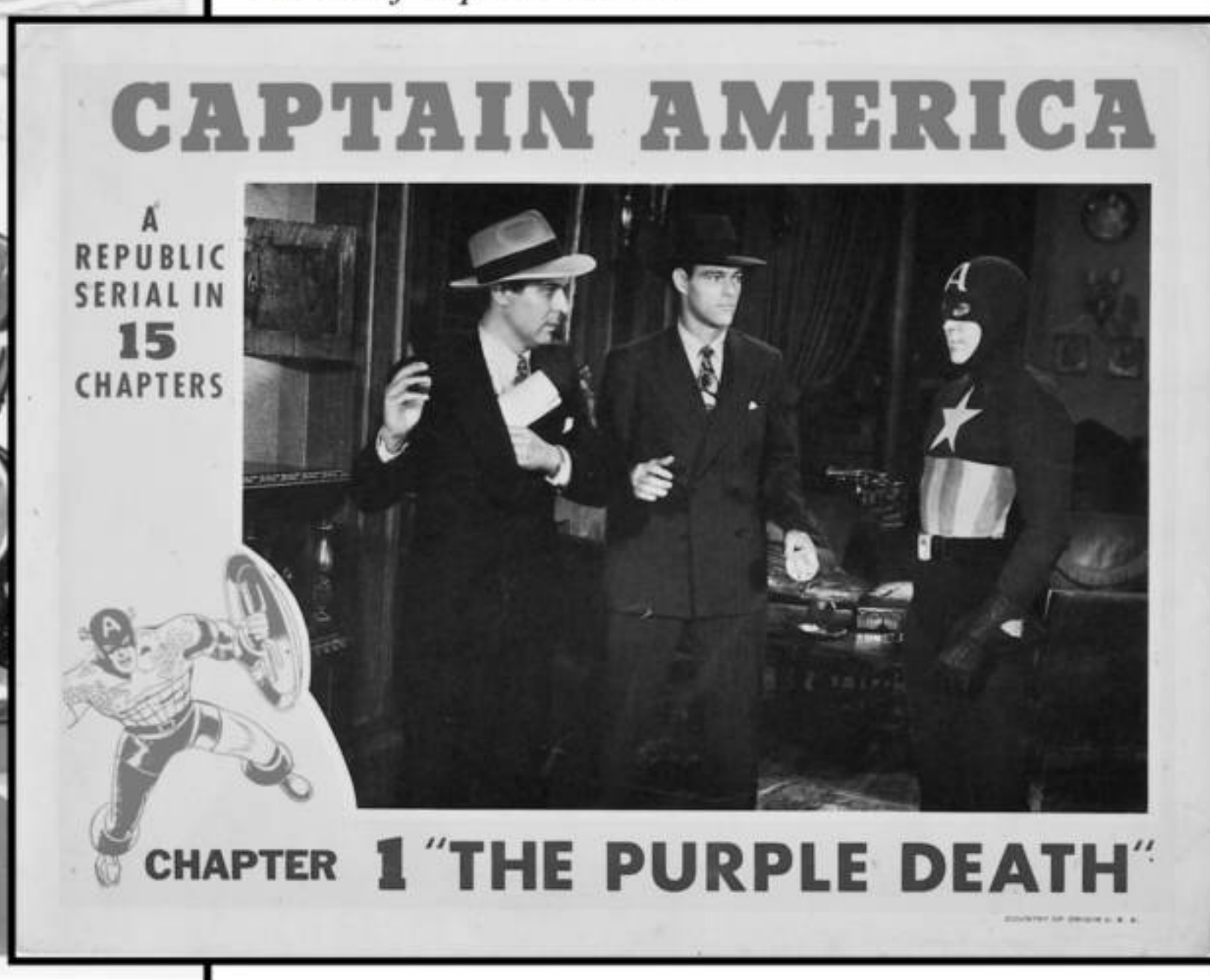
Nearly all of the comic's mythology was abandoned in the Republic serial. No longer was Steve Rogers



associated with the U.S. army or gifted with the results of a Super-Soldier Serum. Instead, Grant Gardner, a district attorney, assumed the mantle of Captain America. Gone were any references to Nazis,

the Red Skull, serums, or Bucky. Cap's costume was simplified for his onscreen incarnation and his signature shield was done away with in favor of a simple gun. The principal villain became the Scarab, a criminal mastermind hell-bent on developing a super-weapon to further his sinister plot.

Some have speculated that by 1944 Republic Pictures had intended to follow up their 1940 serial, *The Mysterious Dr. Satan*, which featured a masked hero called the Copperhead, with a sequel. However, deciding to bank on the growing popularity of Captain America, Republic Pictures altered the *Dr. Satan* scripts to better fit with the comic hero. Others have claimed that Republic was also interested in adapting DC Comic's now forgotten hero, Mr. Scarlet, into a serial but were concerned that the character's dwindling popularity would fail to carry well with audiences. Whichever the case may be, it would seem that Captain America became the fill-in for either an unused *Dr. Satan* or *Mr. Scarlet* vehicle. Judging by how the Captain America serial turned out, one is left to wonder if a script was already prepared and Republic Pictures simply planted Timely Comic's character into the concept. This would explain the lack of Cap's origin, his shield, and the absence of a Nazi threat – which was often a recurring villain in serials at the time. The first chapter of Republic's *Captain America* serial was released to theaters on February 5th, 1944. The serial was re-released to theaters in 1953 as the *Return of Captain America*.



AND LO, THE SMALL SCREEN SHALL LEAD THEM

Captain America's next venture outside of the comic pages came in 1966. Produced by Marvel Comics and Grantray-Lawrence Animation, *The Marvel Super-Heroes* became the first animated series starring some of Marvel's Finest. The series featured Captain America, the Hulk, Iron Man, Sub-Mariner, and Thor. Each hero was featured in their own thirteen-episode story arc, with each episode lasting around seven minutes. A total of sixty-five episodes were produced.



The 1966 Captain America Cartoon.

The Captain America episodes covered his origin, his initial battle with the Red Skull, his adventures with Bucky while taking on the Nazis, being frozen in suspended animation, his team-up with the Avengers, and his final battle with the Red Skull who, by then, had obtained the Cosmic Cube.

The animation itself was very stilted, yet the use of limited motion and frequent reuse of cels can best be described as resembling a sort of proto-motion comic. Perhaps Marvel was ahead of its time! While the animation may lack the fluid movement of contemporary cartoons, fans of Jack Kirby's artwork will find that the artistic rendering of Cap is very much in line with the original comics. The animators imitated Kirby's art down to the smallest detail, giving the show a lasting appeal that older comic fans are sure to appreciate.

One of the most enduring aspects of the '66 Captain America cartoon is the memorable theme song with its unforgettable lyrics:

*"When Captain America throws his mighty shield,
all those who chose to oppose his shield must yield,
if he's led to a fight and a duel is due,
then the red and white and the blue'll come through,
when Captain America throws his mighty shield".*

For those not fortunate enough to have seen Cap's first animated appearance, it is highly recommended that this show is sought out.

LIVE-ACTION ACTION!

The 1970s proved to be a testing ground for Marvel Comics' ventures into the world of live-action television. Though 1977's *The Amazing Spider-Man* TV show offered lackluster results, as did the '78 *Dr. Strange* made-for-television film, Marvel had scored big with *The Incredible Hulk*, also premiering in 1978. The hunt was on for more profitable Marvel icons that could translate well to TV.

Enter: Captain America. Directed by Rod Holcomb and starring Reb Brown, 1979's *Captain America* television movie earned mixed reviews with audiences. It was closer to the source material than the '44 serial, yet, much still remained strikingly different. For example, the main character was Steve Rogers, true to the source material, but the story was modernized and set in the '70s. In the movie, Rogers' father was a government



Reb Brown as Captain America.



agent in the 1940s and there was a form of Super-Soldier Serum, though now called F.L.A.G. (Full Latent Ability Gain) that saves Steve Rogers' life after a near-fatal accident, giving him heightened abilities.

In Holcomb's film the title hero's costume is altered from what comic readers are familiar with, looking to be more spandex and shiny in appearance. Most notable is Captain America's helmet, in favor of the traditional cloth mask. Cap does make use of his trademark shield, though it's actually the windshield visor of his high-tech motorcycle.

That same year another made-for-television movie starring the star-spangled hero was released: *Captain America II: Death Too Soon*. Ivan Nagy assumed the role of director for the second outing while Reb Brown once again played the role of Captain America. The film revolved around a terrorist plot to poison the population of the United States' with a deadly chemical. Miguel, the film's central villain, was portrayed by Christopher Lee. While only airing on television in U.S., the film was released theatrically in some countries outside of America,



Captain America II: Death Too Soon.

including France.

Both films starring Reb Brown were intended to test the waters regarding a potential Captain America television series. Due to a decrease in ratings during airings of the second film, any plans for such a series were scrapped.

BIG SCREEN DILEMMA

The 1980s were a relatively slow time for Marvel's Sentinel of Liberty. Captain America would only make a few television appearances in the early '80s, the first being a public



Cap in Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends.

service announcement about conserving energy while taking on the villainous likes of the Wattage Waster and the Thermal Thief. Cap would guest-star in the 1981 *Spider-Man* cartoon (an episode titled: *The Capture of Captain America*) and return in two episodes of 1981's animated show, *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends*. Both appearances were in the series' first season. *7 Little Superheroes*, featured the Star-Spangled Avenger with Doctor Strange and the Sub-Mariner. Cap's final guest-role in the show was in *Pawns of the Kingpin*, where he is put under the trance of a mind control device invented by Doctor Faustus.

Captain America's most feared enemy, The Red Skull, even made an appearance on *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends*, in the episode *Quest For The Red Skull*. However, Cap himself didn't show up in the episode.



The Red Skull takes on Spider-Man.

THE TURKISH CAPTAIN AMERICA

In 1973 Captain America made an appearance in a low-budget Turkish production titled *3 Dev Adam* (also known as *Three Mighty Men* and as *Turkish Spider-Man vs. Captain Turkish America*). In the film, Captain America teams up with Mexican wrestler, Santo, to thwart the villainous Spider-Man who leads a widespread criminal organization known as the Spider's Gang. It goes without saying that both Captain America and Spider-Man were used without Marvel's permission.



1985 was a peculiar year for Captain America, for it was the year the comic hero was to appear in his own



Broadway musical! Over \$4 million dollars was invested into the production, which ultimately went belly-up. The story centered on the superhero having a mid-life crisis and being portrayed as less-than 'super'. However, his heroic colors show once again after his girlfriend is kidnapped by terrorists and he has to take them on at the Lincoln Memorial.

In 1989, following DC Comics' successful *Batman* film, Marvel attempted to bring Captain America to the big screen. They hired director Albert Pyun, who was fresh off his successful Jean-Claude Van Damme film, *Cyborg*. A number of notable actors were considered for the lead role, including Arnold Schwarzenegger, Dolph Lundgren, and Val Kilmer, before settling on



Matt Salinger (son of *Catcher in the Rye* author, J.D. Salinger!). Starring Ronny Cox (*Robocop*), Ned Beatty (*Deliverance*), Darren McGavin (*Kolchak: The Night Stalker*), and Scott Paulin (*The Right Stuff*), Pyun had a talented cast to work with – but not all was well. 21st Century Film Corporation, in association with Marvel Productions, whittled-down the film's budget just before production began, leaving many proposed scenes to be abandoned. Once filming wrapped in 1990 Marvel had the film test-screened. It was decided that a few more action scenes should be added, leading to re-shoots. Allegedly, Stan Lee was happy with the end product and even claimed that test audiences liked what they had seen.



Matt Salinger as Captain America.



The film was then scheduled to be released summer of 1990. However, due to Marvel having second thoughts about the project and 21st Century Film's financial issues, Pyun's *Captain America* was shelved for the better part of two years. *Captain America* was finally released in summer of 1992, but only direct-to-video in the United States. Ironically, Pyun's film was given a limited theatrical release in the international market.

At times the film's limited budget is noticeable on-screen and some story issues have irked comic fans. A particular subject viewers struggle with is the Red Skull's origin. While Cap's nemesis is indeed portrayed as a Nazi, he is not German – instead, the Skull is portrayed as Italian in the film, having been abducted from his family as a child by the Nazis. Though this is an attempt to make the Red Skull have a more sympathetic back story, it is understandable why audiences familiar with the comic would object. Regardless, if compared to Captain America's earlier on-screen appearances, this is a relatively small issue. At least there *is* a Red Skull in this version. Also, the Red Skull, pre-'90s face-lift, looks menacing and commanding when on screen.



Scott Paulin as The Red Skull.



Captain America's costume and shield are nearly as accurate as can be (the costume was designed by the same company that created Tim Burton's '89 *Batman* suit). It's safe to say that fans will probably not *ever* see a more faithful comic-to-screen translation of the red, white, and blue outfit. It looks as though Cap leapt straight out of the comic page and into the world of live-action.

The story itself is very much in the proper vein of the Captain America comics, covering his World War II days to his arrival in the modern era.



Despite this, Marvel did their best to give Pyun's *Captain America* film the brush off, but not without recouping some financial losses with the video and laserdisc sales. To date, an official DVD release has not happened. Pyun himself claims to be working on a Blu-Ray Director's Cut but, as of this writing, it has yet to be released.

BACK TO ANIMATION

In 1992 Marvel, in partnership with Saban Entertainment, produced the hugely popular *X-Men* animated series. The episode *Old Soldiers* featured Captain America and Wolverine taking on the Nazis and the Red Skull.



Captain America in *X-Men*.

Marvel's other successful animated show, *Spider-Man*, would go on to guest-star Captain America in several episodes during the series' last season. Most prominent was in the *Six Forgotten Warriors* story-arc where Cap battled the Red Skull and the three-part *Secret Wars*, which had him joining Spider-Man to defeat an assortment of villains including the Red Skull, Doctor Octopus, and the Doctor Doom.



Cap in *Spider-Man: The Animated Series*.

1999's animated series, *The Avengers: United They Stand*, included flashbacks of Captain America fighting Baron Zemo in the episode, *Command Decision*. An episode of *X-Men: Evolution*, titled *Operation Rebirth*, showcased Marvel's patriotic powerhouse.

2006 marked the release of two *Ultimate Avengers* direct-to-DVD animated films that consisted of The Avenger's line-up from Marvel's then-current 'Ultimate' titles. Joining Iron Man, Thor, the Wasp, Giant-Man, the Black Widow, and the Hulk, was the super-soldier himself, Captain America. The first *Ultimate Avengers* film focused on Cap's back story, while the second largely centered on the Black Panther.



'Ultimate' Captain America.

In 2009 *The Super Hero Squad Show*, which featured Marvel Comics' heroes in a more cartoonish, super-deformed style, presented Captain America as one of the main characters.

Currently, Captain America is featured alongside his fellow Avengers in Marvel's latest animated series, *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes*.



THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN AMERICA

2008 brought about Marvel's summer blockbuster, *Iron Man*, leading to a sprinkling of subtle hints regarding an upcoming *Avengers* film, as the post-credits Nick Fury scene revealed. In addition, a variation of Captain America's shield can be seen in Tony Stark's workshop in both *Iron Man* and in *Iron Man 2*.

Also, in 2008, *The Incredible Hulk* featured references to the Super-Soldier Serum which is linked with Captain America's origin. The original opening of the film was to feature the Hulk in the arctic and a partial reveal of Captain America's frozen body and shield. The scene was shot but removed from the final cut.

At the time of this writing, Joe Johnston's big budget *Captain America* film is scheduled for a July 22nd, 2011 release. It stars Chris Evans as the title character and Hugo Weaving as the Red Skull. Set in the days of World War II, the film will tell the story of how Steve Rogers



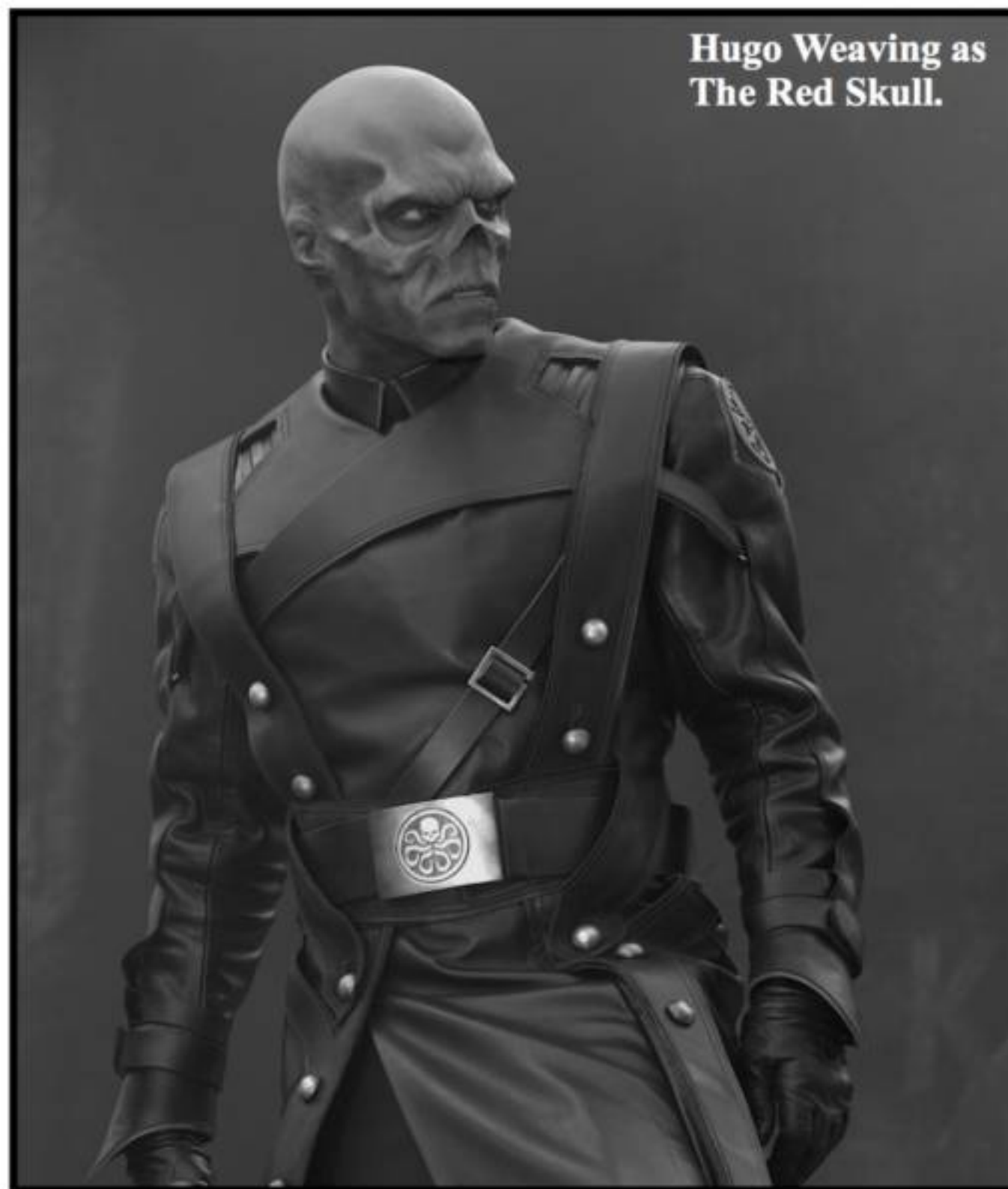
became the legendary stars-and-stripes-clad hero.

Following Johnston's *Captain America* will be *The Avengers*, coming summer 2012. How will Johnston's film portray Marvel's patriotic icon? Does it do the First Avenger justice? Chances are good that it will be the closest adaptation of the character to infiltrate the medium of film. Yet, will that be enough? One can only wait and see – but it seems that no matter the odds, Marvel's enduring

hero will continue to stand the test of time and could very well make many future appearances in film, television, and animation.

So, how has a character first created in 1941 remained relevant today? Few can say, but one likely answer may be found in the following chorus:

*"If he's led to a fight and a duel is due,
then the red and white and the blue'll come through,
when Captain America throws his mighty shield".*



Hugo Weaving as
The Red Skull.



Chris Evans as Captain America.

INTERVIEW WITH ROD HOLCOMB

THE MAN WHO DIRECTED THE 1979



A MAN OF ACTION!

Rod Holcomb is no stranger to television. He's directed episodes of *The Six Million Dollar Man*, the original *Battlestar Galactica*, *Fantasy Island*, *The Greatest American Hero*, *The A-Team*, *Lost*, an Emmy award-winning episode of *ER* (along with a number of Emmy-nominated episodes), *Numb3rs*, *CSI: Miami*, *Law & Order: LA*, among many countless others. He's also produced a host of television shows, including *The New Adventures of Wonder Woman*, *Wiseguy*, and *Shark*.

Mr. Holcomb was kind enough to take time out of his busy schedule to discuss his directorial work on the 1979 *Captain America* TV movie with us.

SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE: How did you become attached as director to the 1979 made-for-television *Captain America* film?

ROD HOLCOMB: I was the associate producer on *The Six Million Dollar Man*. I had just completed two one-hour episodes and one two-hour episode. Alan Balter was the executive producer on *Six* and the writer and executive producer of *Captain America*. He offered it to me.

SM: Prior to working on *Captain America*, were you familiar with the comics?

RH: I grew up on *Superman*.

SM: Do you recall how much input Marvel Comics had on the film and, if so, were there any conditions Marvel had regarding the character or the story?

RH: I don't remember any Marvel personnel on the set. I'm sure Alan had a number of conversations with Marvel while he was writing the script. I don't know if they had script approval.

SM: Can you share any interesting stories or anecdotes regarding the filming of *Captain America*?

RH: It was a massive job. It was my first big film and it took me a little time to get into the groove. All I remember is that it turned out just okay. The second one was better.

SM: In 1979 the second made-for-television *Captain*

America film was released. Did you have any input on the sequel?

RH: No. Ivan Nagy was the director. A great photographer from Hungary. He did a great job.

SM: Are you aware if, at the time, a third *Captain America* film was being considered?

RH: No. I know about the [2011] feature. They'll have the money to do it right.

SM: You were an associate producer on *The New Adventures of Wonder Woman*, being that Wonder Woman was a DC Comics property, did they operate any differently from Marvel, with regard to Captain America.

RH: Again, I wasn't involved in the development process. I can't imagine it would be much different.

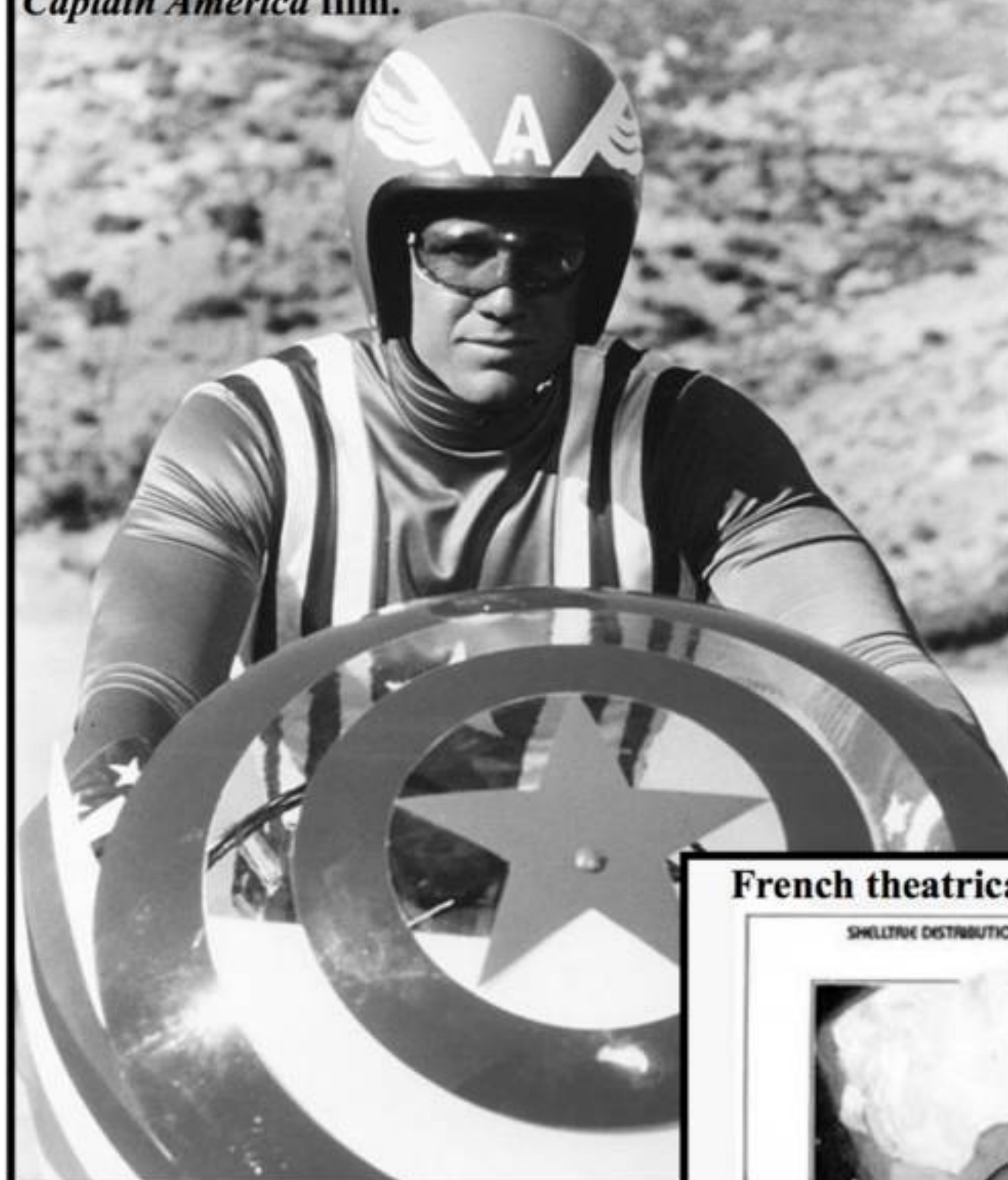
SM: Your impressive career in television has spanned a very wide range of genres and shows. You've directed episodes of sci-fi/fantasy programs such as *The Six-Million Dollar Man*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Fantasy Island*, and *The Greatest American Hero* – but you have also worked on shows that are more reality-based, like *Wiseguy*, *ER*, *Numb3rs*, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, and *CSI: Miami*. Is there a particular genre that you prefer, or one that you find more rewarding?

RH: I like the variety. What the sci-fi had was more humor. It works on all levels. The dramas sometimes take themselves a little more seriously. Steve Cannell was great with humor.

SM: From a personal standpoint, do you feel that television has changed since you first started working in the business?



A publicity photo of Reb Brown in Rod Holcomb's 1979 *Captain America* film.



The redesigned costume in *Captain America II: Death Too Soon*, directed by Ivan Nagy.

RH: It's changed because of vertical integration. The network owns the studio and vice versa. There is more control being exerted on the creative community. The biggest disappointment is that the creative executive community doesn't know what they have until they see it.

SM: Are there any projects that you're currently working on that you'd like to share with us?

RH: A couple of pilots are being written. But, as you know, everything is smoke in the wind until you sign the dotted line. Even then, you never know.



French theatrical poster.



Though only airing on television in the United States, in France *Captain America II: Death Too Soon* was given a theatrical release and retitled simply, *Captain America*.

POSTER WARS

CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER



The U.S. theatrical poster for *Captain America: The First Avenger*.



Sadly, the most imaginative poster for *Captain America* isn't being featured on theater walls. This retro-style poster depicting the Star-Spangled Avenger giving Hitler the ol' right hook is a homage to the very first issue of *Captain America Comics* and was only available to audience members at the L.A. Times Hero Complex Film Festival. Only 100 of these posters were printed for the festival, though Marvel has produced a limited amount that were given to cast and crew members who worked on the film.



A collection of three international 'character posters'.





THE
**CAPTAIN
AMERICA**
CARTOON THAT
NEVER WAS!

WE SPEAK WITH WILL MEUGNIOT ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA AND SOME OF HIS OTHER WORK

THE RED, THE WHITE, AND THE BLUES

Aside from his animated chapters in 1966's *Marvel Super Heroes* series, Captain America has never starred in his own cartoon. That was to change in the late '90s, when Marvel Productions and Saban Entertainment were trying to bring the character back to television in a self-titled animated series. The cartoon would have taken place during World War II, featured Bucky as Cap's sidekick, and included the Red Skull as the main villain. However, despite the inclusion of Captain America's most popular foe, the show was not going to depict any Nazis in order to adhere to strict children's television 'standards'. Marvel was having financial issues at the time and backed out at the last minute, leaving the series to be cancelled. A number of episode scripts were written and a sixty-second promo reel was created, which gives viewers a brief offering of what the show would have looked like.

The term, 'a man of many talents' can apply to Will Meugniot, but even *that* doesn't seem to do him justice. His career resume, which covers some of the most popular animated shows of all time, is awe-inspiring, to say the least.

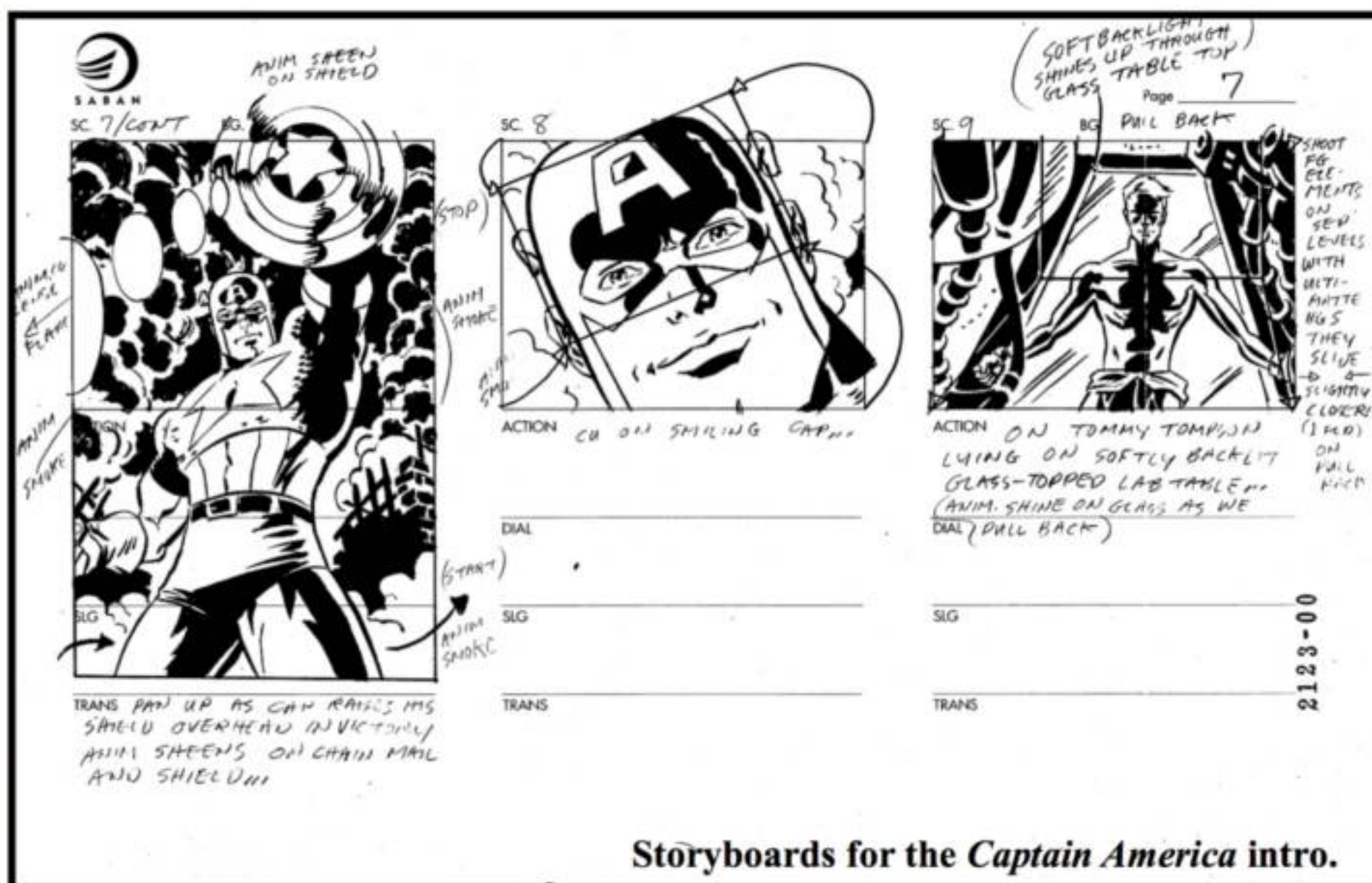
Mr. Meugniot's contribution to animation borders on legendary, having worked as storyboard artist on *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends*, *G.I. Joe*, *Jem*, *C.O.P.S.*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Bucky O'Hare and the Toad Wars!*, *Silver Surfer*, and *Biker Mice From Mars*, as a producer/supervising director on *The Real Ghostbusters*, *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*, *Conan: The Adventurer*, *X-Men*, and *Exosquad*, as writer for *Street Fighter: The Animated Series*, and *Spider-Man Unlimited*, and has even contributed his artistic skills to the world of comics, including *DNAgents*, *Marvel Team-Up*, *Marvel Chillers*, *Howard the Duck*, *Vanity*, and *FemForce*.

And this is by no means a complete list of his work!

**S H A D O W L A N D
MAGAZINE:** Few people are aware that Marvel was trying to release a *Captain America* animated series in the late 1990s. To start off, would you mind telling us about the premise and setting of this *Captain America* series? How far into production

did it go and why was it ultimately shelved?

WILL MEUGNIOT: The *Captain America* cartoon was set during the Second World War, and dealt with his earliest adventures, many adapted from the Simon and Kirby issues of the comic. One of my favorite stories was our version of the Dragon Sub. The series was five scripts and two storyboards in when the plug was pulled. I recommend that anyone interested in what was going on with Marvel at that time read the excellent book, *Comic Wars: How Two Tycoons Battled Over the Marvel Comics Empire--And Both Lost* by Dan Raviv. The short version is that Marvel



Storyboards for the *Captain America* intro.

underwent a sudden change in management teams due to their bankruptcy. The *Silver Surfer* cartoon's second season and Cap's first were casualties of this shift.

SM: It's easy to understand why Marvel Comics and the television networks were sensitive about using any Nazi references in a Saturday morning *Captain America* cartoon, but what was the reason behind changing Steve Roger's name to Tommy Tompkins?

WM: I wish I knew. The Tommy Tompkins idea was in place when I took on the show. Despite my attempts to drop it and those of the other comic fans involved, the idea could not be killed.

slim, at any point do you know if Marvel was considering doing *Ultimate Avengers 3*?

WM: I don't believe so. The goal of the video line was to introduce as many concepts as possible.

SM: Another animated series you worked on as storyboard artist was *Diabolik*, based on Italy's popular comic book character. *Diabolik* was essentially a master thief and an anti-hero (our readers might be familiar with the 1968 film, *Danger: Diabolik*, directed by Mario Bava). The animated series did extremely well in Europe but never aired in North America. Can you shed some light on why it never made it to television in the U.S.?



WM: I only worked on the *Diabolik* pilot film, not the entire series, which was produced by Ron Myrick. Ron knew I was a fan of the character and let me do the storyboard for him just because I wanted to draw the character. *Diabolik* never got serious consideration from the U.S. Fox Kids programmers since the character is largely unknown here.

SM: As storyboard artist, writer, director, and producer you've worked on many of the biggest titles in animation history. Can you tell us a little about some of the lesser known shows that you've contributed to, particularly

Captain America and Bucky race into action!

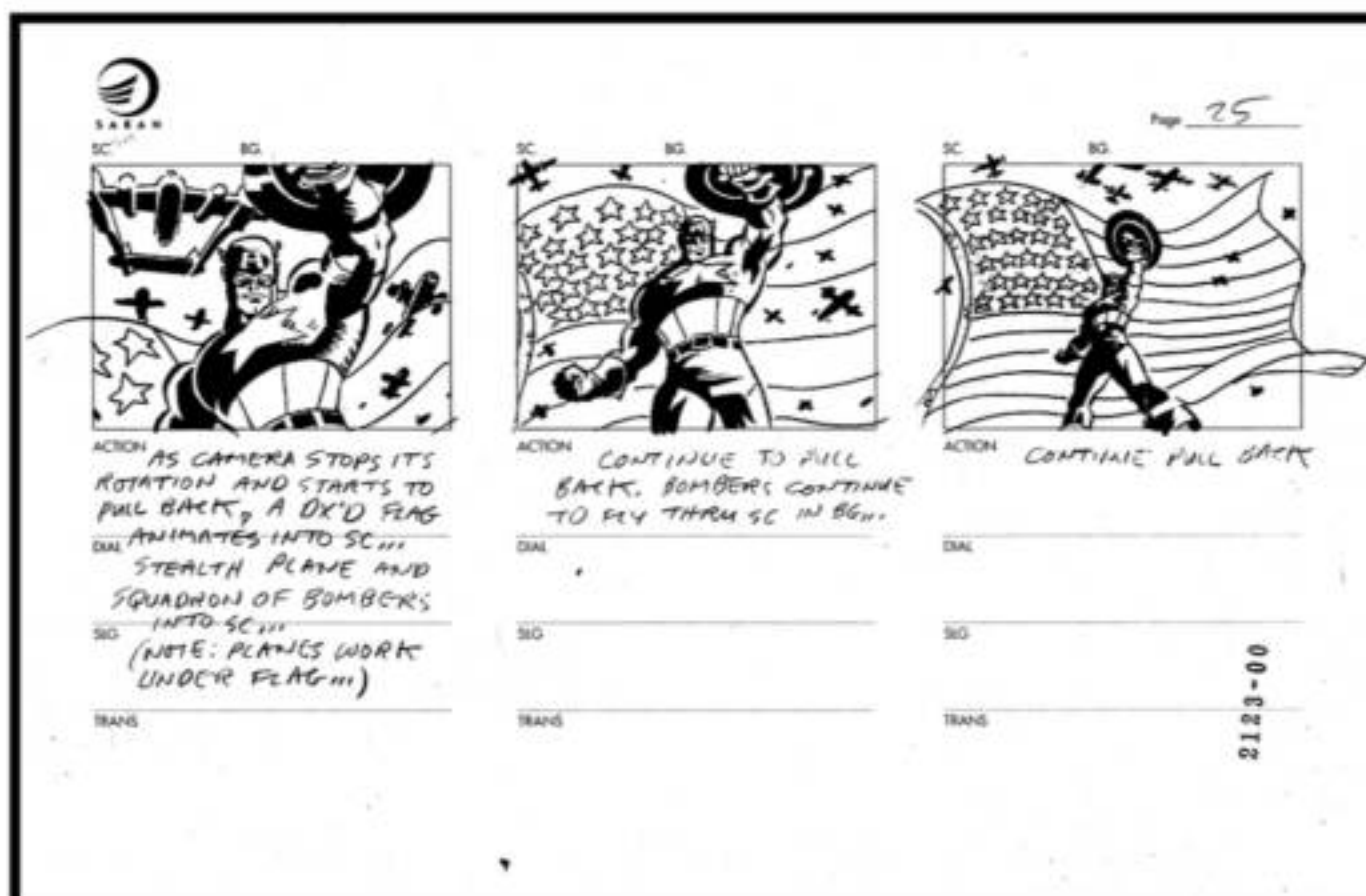
SM: Are you aware if a *Captain America* toy line was in the works, in order to accompany the series?

WM: No. It would have followed, of course, but no designs or prototypes were seen around the Fox Kids' offices.

SM: Back in the 1990s many of Marvel Comics' animated shows, like *X-Men* and *Spider-Man*, featured character crossovers. Both shows had guest-appearances by Captain America, with some notable ones in the last season of the *Spider-Man* series. Do you know if these guest-roles were being used to gauge young viewers' interest in the *Captain America* series?

WM: Not per se. There was discussion of Cap having his own series as far back as the '80s. In fact, my friends Rick Hoberg and Larry Houston were in pre-production on a Cap cartoon in 1987 when Marvel's animation arm hit a rough patch, resulting in that version being scrubbed as well. A couple of years later while I was doing *Captain Planet* and *The Real Ghostbusters*, Marvel approached me about developing Captain America with The Avengers as a series, but I didn't have the time to do it.

SM: Even though the 1990s *Captain America* series never happened, you did get to work on an animated project featuring the character in *Ultimate Avengers 2*, which you directed. Though the chances for another sequel now seem



Marvel's *RoboCop* cartoon, the short-lived *Swamp Thing* cartoon, and the 1979 Hanna-Barbera *Godzilla* cartoon that you worked as story director on?

WM: *RoboCop* was in production at the same time as Rick and Larry's *Captain America* and its production was suspended for several months. During its initial development, Hutton and Love were the producers, I was the art director/board supervisor and the main designer was Russ Heath. By the time it resumed production, I'd gone over to DIC and was producing and directing *The Real Ghostbusters*. Boyd Kirkland took over as director and Roger Slifer was the story editor. They did a great job with very limited production resources.

Swamp Thing was a miniseries designed to promote a toy line, and beyond the broadest outline had very little to do with the comic book version. I only did a couple of storyboards for the show, but it was fun to draw *Swamp Thing*, even in this form.

Godzilla marked a turning point in my life. The show was produced by Doug Wildey, the creator of *Jonny Quest*. Doug was a great guy and took a bunch of us under his wing and taught us the basics of animation. Rick Hoberg, Dave Stevens, Bill Wray, Don Rico, Mike Sekowsky, Russ Heath and Paul Power were some of the other comic artists recruited for the series.

SM: Your amount of work regarding animated television shows is staggering, not to mention your contribution to comic books, with *Marvel Team-Up*, *Howard the Duck*, and *Marvel Chillers*. However, if you had to pick a few of your favorite shows that you worked on, which ones would you choose?

WM: *Exosquad* is my favorite for a lot of reasons. I am also very fond of *X-Men*, *Jem*, *Spydogs*, *Captain Planet*



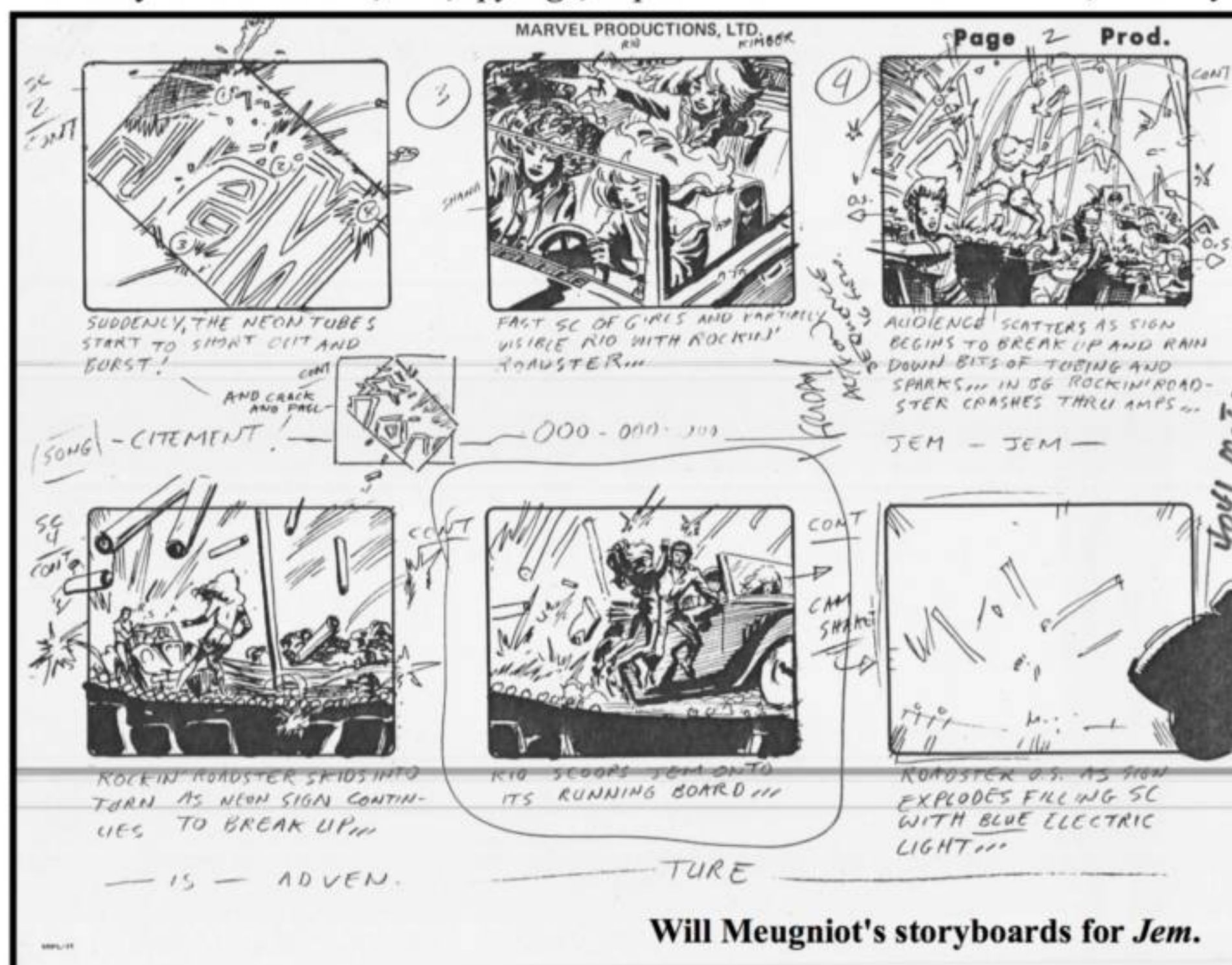
A promo for *Captain Planet*.

and *the Real Ghostbusters*. In an entirely different vein, I'm really proud of the *Bob*, *The Builder* episodes I recently co-directed with Paul Sabella.

SM: For kids, Saturday mornings used to be an event. It

seems that every year more and more channels discard or whittle down their Saturday morning lineup. What are your thoughts on the reasoning for this? Do you believe that the influx of imported shows from Japan (*Pokemon*, *Digimon*, *Yu-gi-oh*, etc.) had anything to do with the decline of Saturday morning programs?

WM: People hate to hear artists talk this way, but the decline of Saturday morning has less to do with the programming than a new business dynamic which is continuing to develop in unexpected ways. The downside is no Saturday morning as we used to know it. The upside is dedicated animation-heavy channels like Cartoon Network and DXD.

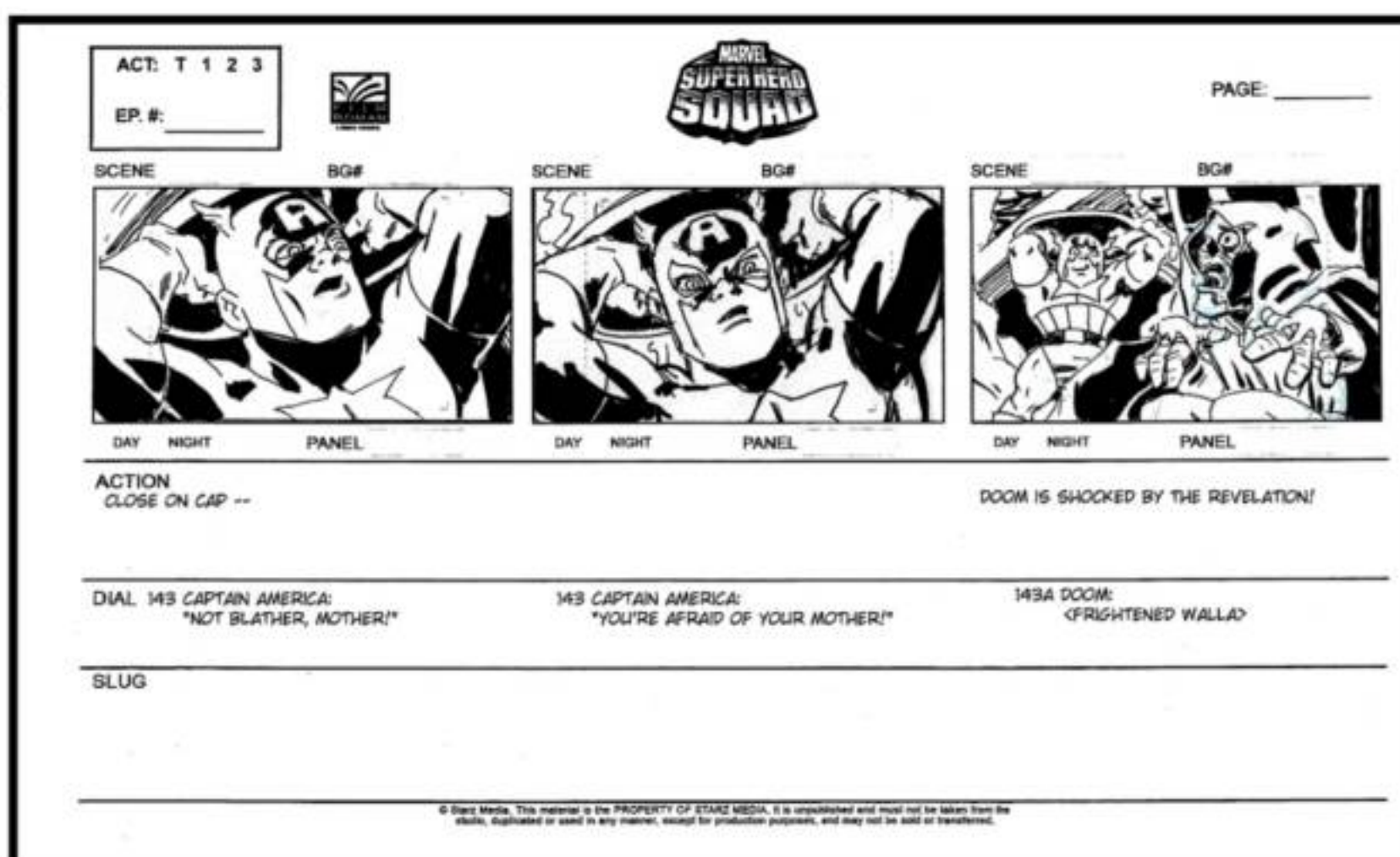


SM: Do you think there might be the potential for Marvel to revisit the idea of another *Captain America* animated series, due to the new summer blockbuster and upcoming *Avengers* film?

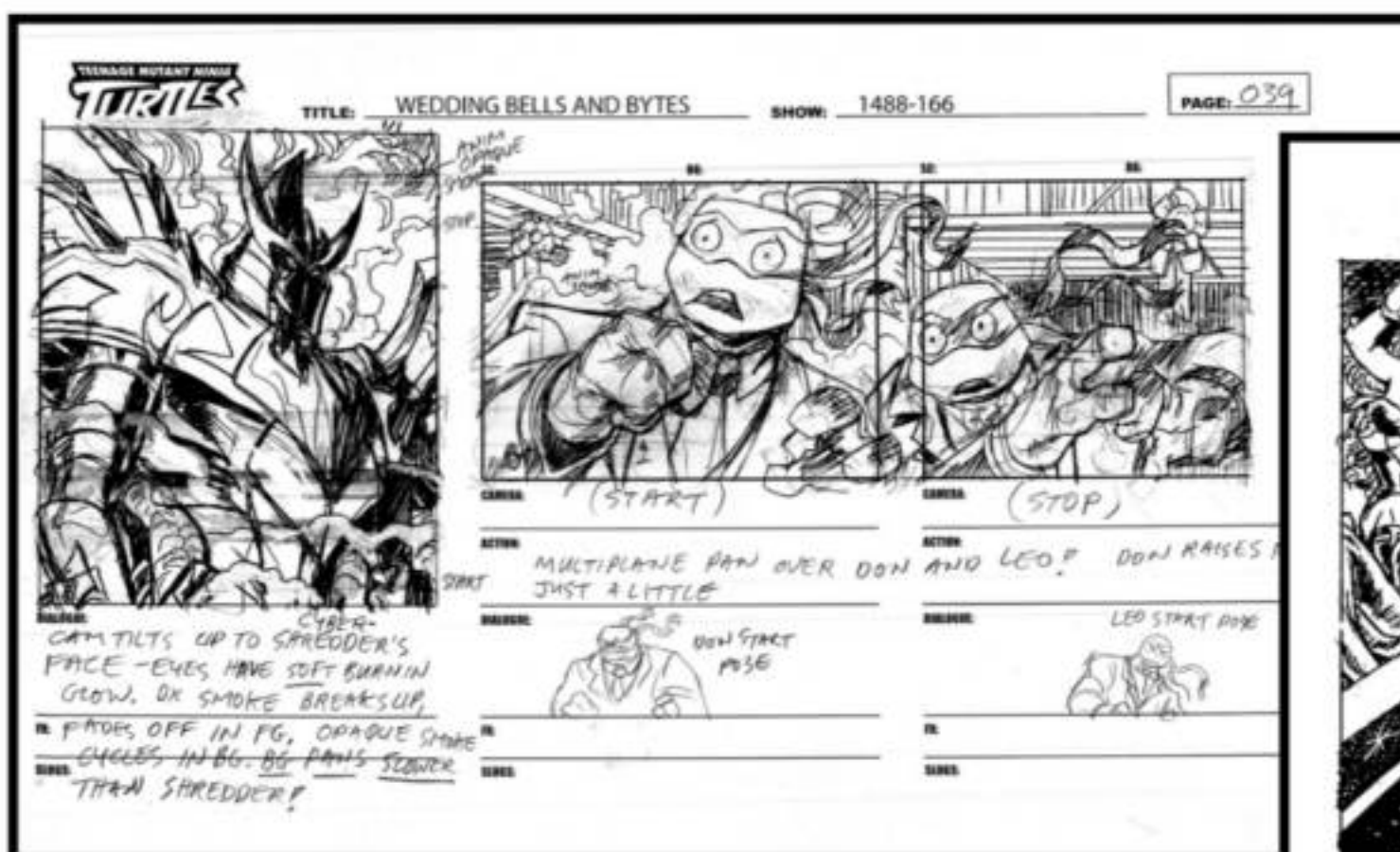
WM: Your guess is as good as mine in that regard.

SM: Are there any projects that you're currently working on that you could reveal?

WM: At the moment I'm directing a still-secret pilot film for a new animated series by day and doing some new comic book covers and stories for my old friends at AC Comics in my free time.



Captain America and Dr. Doom in the Marvel Super Hero Squad.

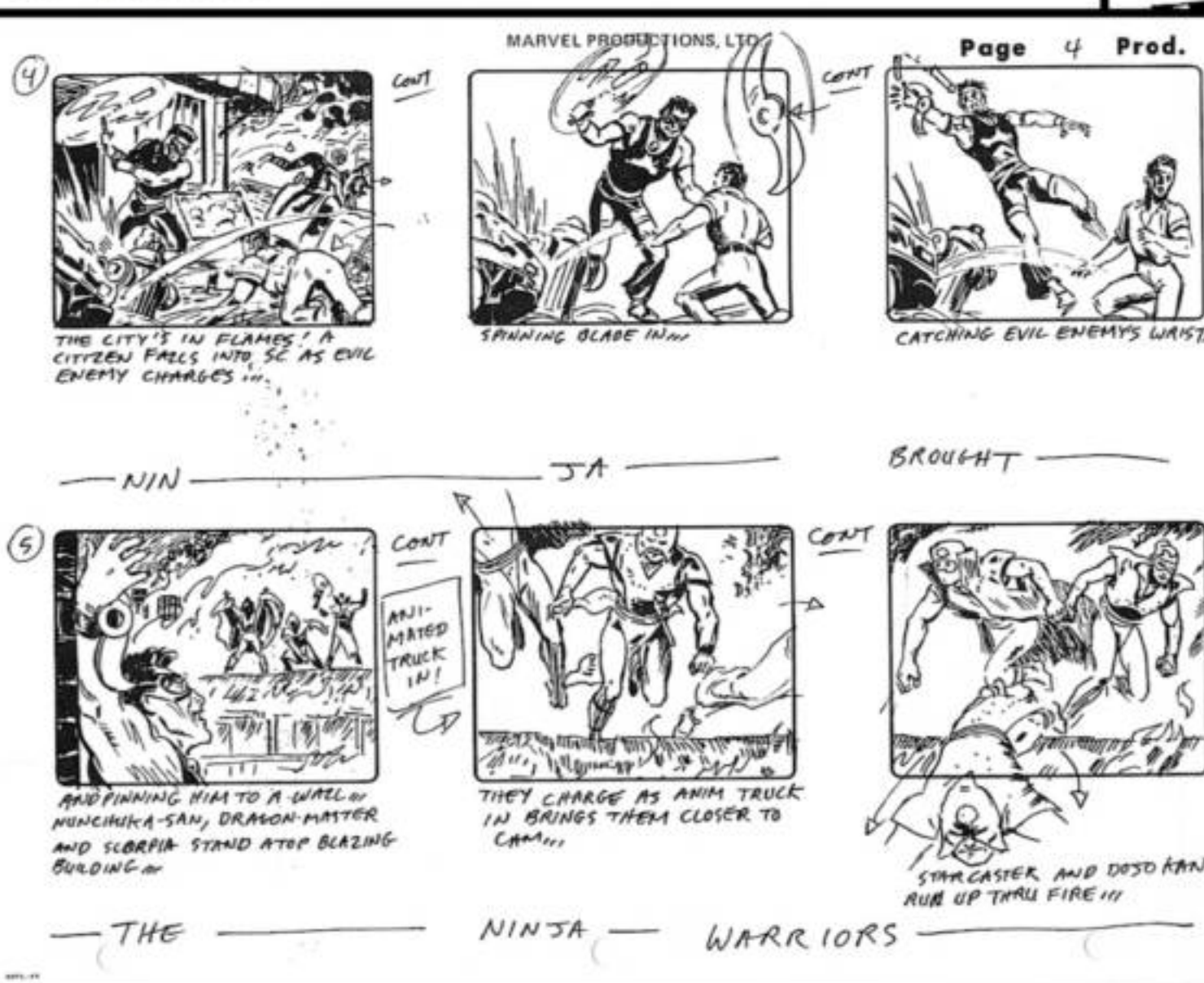


Meugniot's work on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (2003).

Shadowland Magazine appreciates the time Mr. Meugniot has taken to participate in our interview and would like to thank him for allowing us to use his fantastic artwork in our magazine.



AC Comics' FemForce.



Storyboards for Hasbro's 1987 Ninja Warriors toy commercial.

Captain Planet Promotional Cover:
Design and Pencils by Will Meugniot.
Finish and Coloring by Neal Adams and Continuity.

All storyboards are pencils and inks by Will Meugniot, except for the Captain America pages which were inked by Dave Simons.

BEYOND FANTASTIQUE!

[bee-ond: outside the understanding, limits, or reach of; past: beyond comprehension.]

[fan-tas-teek: a French term for a cinematic or literary genre encompassing horror, science fiction and fantasy.]

CINEMA:

HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN

Yer Dead Films; 2011, Running Time: 86 Min., Dir: Jason Eisener, Writers: John Davies & Jason Eisener; Cast: Rutger Hauer, Molly Dunsworth, Brian Downey.



Fully Loaded or a Few Shells Short?

For those that don't know, *Hobo with a Shotgun* first surfaced in 2007 as a two-minute trailer that won Robert Rodriguez's South by Southwest *Grindhouse Trailers Contest*. It was then attached to Tarantino and Rodriguez's *Grindhouse* (2007) as one of the fake trailers, but was only shown in Canada and in select theaters across North America. This raises the question, why wasn't it shown in *all* theaters? Maybe because the *Hobo* trailer was actually *better* than Tarantino and Rodriguez's *Grindhouse* effort. I've long since held the view that *Grindhouse* more resembled the work of two film students, spoiled with boatloads of money and fancy equipment than any real down-and-dirty grindhouse film I've ever seen. Oh, and believe me, I've seen my share.

Jason Eisener, the director of the *Hobo with a Shotgun* trailer, has since turned his two-minute award-winning preview into a full-length feature film. Having first seen the original faux-trailer back in '07 I had been a staunch supporter of *Hobo*. I felt that, finally, someone *could* capture the actual 'grindhouse spirit' that had eluded Tarantino and Rodriguez. Still, I was concerned that by the time *Hobo* was made it could become a pale shadow of its former trailer-self. And so, with bated breath, I waited...

It can't be said that Eisener's *Hobo with a Shotgun* film doesn't follow the general premise of the trailer. In that respect, it does. A hobo, played by Rutger Hauer (*Nighthawks*, *Blade Runner*), makes his way into a new town to find that it's rising past the boiling point with corruption and anarchy. After a chain of grueling, and often gory, events, the Hobo puts aside his noble ambitions to buy a lawnmower (he wants to start his own business) and purchases a shotgun instead - in hopes that using it will curb the tide of rampant evil in the town. This puts him at odds with the town's sadistic 'ruler', Drake.

Okay, so it stayed true to the trailer, right? What can I possibly criticize, right? Just about everything. Instead of making a feature film *based-on* a two-minute trailer, Eisener turned his eighty-six minute film *into* a glorified trailer. People today, Tarantino and Rodriguez included, assume a homage to grindhouse films is a free pass at making an emotionless roller coaster of blood, guts, and gore. Sorry to say, many of the original grindhouse films actually *did* have some semblance of emotion and heart (gasp!).

And now we come to one of the film's main problems: *Hobo* adds violence for violence sake. I assure you, I take no issue with gratuitous violence in film, but the brutality in Eisener's *Hobo* seems to be there just to shock the audience. Was I shocked? No. Bored? Yes. It backfired and had the *opposite* effect on me; I became so desensitized, I no longer cared. *Hobo* takes great pains to become a greatest hits list of gory, two-fisted, school-bus torching, decapitating, eye-gouging, glass-eating violence. Sure, you're watching a movie called *Hobo with a Shotgun*, I sure would hope it's going to be violent, but like Rodriguez's *Planet Terror* the violence was there just to elicit a mindless stream of "cewws" and "ahhhhs" from the audience.

When you're not made to care about the characters you simply don't care about *anything* that happens to them, whether they lose a finger or lose their head. When you *do* care about a character and invest your emotions in them, you can feel for that character when they *stub their toe*. It seems Eisener, at least from what I've seen with *Hobo with a Shotgun*, hasn't developed the filmmaking skills yet to make his audience really care.

The characters of Drake and his two sons nearly drag Eisener's film into the gutter. It's unclear if the actors playing those roles were really *that* bad or if they were just trying to emulate the grindhouse style? Their overreacting and hammy portrayals pushed their scenes well-over the edge, and not in a good way. It's been said that a film's hero is only as good as its villain. If that's true, *Hobo with a Shotgun* is in trouble, because when you have a villain that's more annoying than menacing, there's a big problem.

Now here's the difference between true grindhouse films and these pseudo-imitators: unlike the so-called grindhouse 'tributes' today, those old grindhouse films weren't made to be bad. Yeah, that might be a revelation to Tarantino and his followers. The real grindhouse films were actually made to be 'good' films, but unrestrained by popular taste – thus they became known as exploitation films (not particularly by the people who made them, but by the general public). They were only considered 'bad' and became underground-hits due to their limited resources, not because the filmmaker set out to film a rough, jittery, bleached Technicolor film.

This brings up the coloring in *Hobo*. I am a staunch fan of Technicolor and vibrant visuals, which in some scenes, *Hobo* nails perfectly. Yet, in most scenes it degenerates back to the bland, washed-out orange/yellow glow that's apparent in nine-out-of-ten films released today.

"You can't solve the world's problems with a shotgun," says Abby, the hooker with a heart of gold.

"It's all I know," replies the Hobo.

This is an example of what *Hobo with a Shotgun* does right. Hauer is a fantastic actor and often doesn't receive the respect he deserves in Hollywood. With Eisener's film he takes what could have been a completely lifeless role and imparts it with a soul. Every scene with Hauer shines, despite all odds being against him. At times I could swear that the script was written by two different people, one wanting to make a good film and one who was desperately dead-set on making a bad film.

The scenes with The Plague also stood out as some of *Hobo's* finer moments. The Plague are two heavily armored bounty hunter-types who wouldn't be out of place in an '80s horror flick. It's a shame they weren't used more instead of Drake and his Tom Cruise-impersonating sons.



At the end of the day, what is *Hobo with a Shotgun*? Is it a failed attempt at a grindhouse film? Was it an exercise in shock value? If it was, I was left indifferent. Perhaps *Hobo* was really trying to make a statement about how lower classes are treated in relation to the upper class? A commentary on how society looks at the homeless?

Was that what the glass-eating scene with the crazed videographer about? A satire on commercialism and sensationalism? If so, the messages were buried a bit too deep, at least for me to decipher. Maybe *Hobo* was just made as good clean (dirty?) fun. When all is said and done, I wouldn't recommend *Hobo* as a movie that needs to be seen. With that said, it's always great to have Rutger Hauer on screen and The Plague's scenes were enjoyable. The film is peppered with some humorous moments, such as the newspaper headline: "Hobo stops begging, demands change." I desperately wanted to like *Hobo with a Shotgun*, but probably not as desperately as Eisener wanted to shock his audience.

For those interested in genuine grindhouse films check out *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965), *Vanishing Point* (1971), *Coffy* (1973), *Ilsa, She Wolf of the SS*, and *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978).

--- Reviewed by Chris Nelson

ROCK 'N' ROLL NIGHTMARE

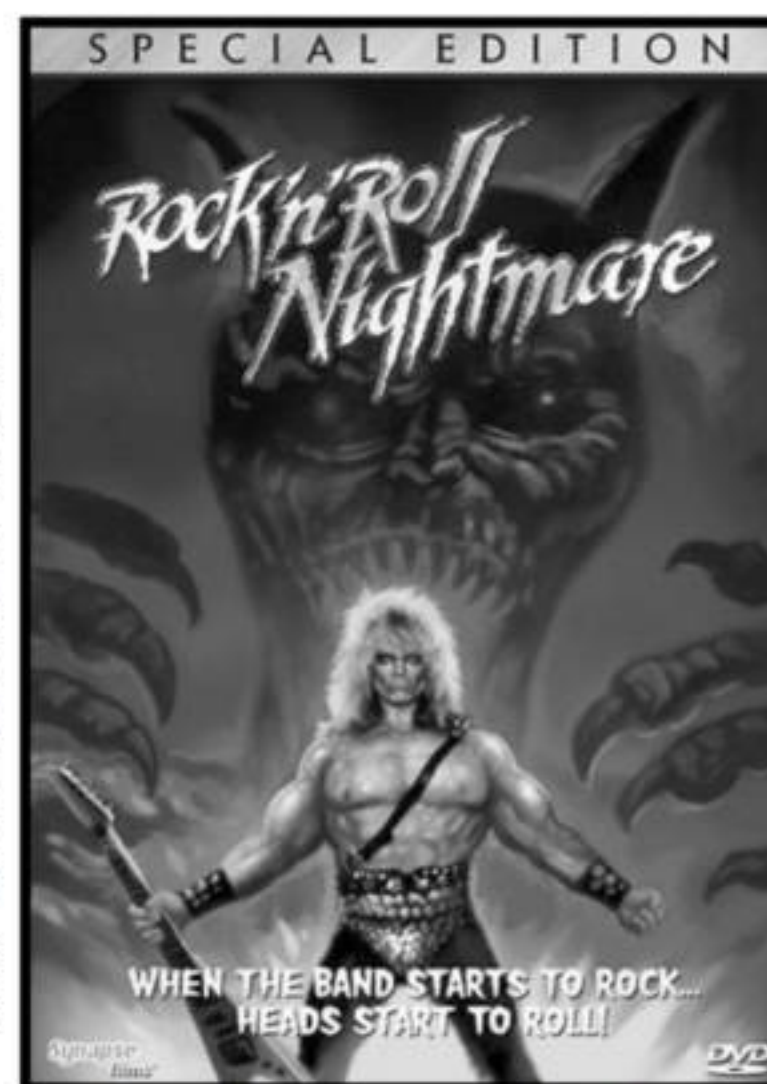
Thunder Films; 1987, Running Time: 83 Min., Dir: John Fasano, Writer: Jon Mikl Thor; Cast: Jon Mikl Thor, Jillian Peri, Frank Dietz.

A Different Kind of Thor

Marvel Comics' *Thor* may have ushered in the summer blockbusters this year, but Jon Mikl Thor is *always* ready to usher in some heavy metal to thwart Satan. In many ways *Rock 'N' Roll Nightmare* is a surreal experience, but one that won't be soon forgot (maybe for the wrong reasons). The premise is simple, John Triton (played by Thor) rents out a farm house so that his heavy metal band, fittingly named Triton, can record some new tracks. At first things go well, a few tunes are performed, there's gratuitous female nudity, and the mood is relaxed. That is, until Triton's band members start to disappear.

It turns out that the farmhouse is actually Satan's temporary living quarters. As could be expected, Triton is the last man standing and takes up arms against the Devil himself, or 'Ol Scratch as Triton affectionately calls him. The battle offers a host of strange little beasties, demonic rod puppets, cyclopean flying starfish, and a bizarre (though unexpected) twist.

Rock 'N' Roll Nightmare was a Canadian production on a *very* limited budget. The film certainly has its share of problems; most apparent is the ten minute van scene where Triton and his band are driving to the farmhouse. Saying the scene drags at a snail's pace would be a harsh understatement and an insult to the snail, though the film





Thor choking Ol' Scratch.

does pick up considerably once they *get* to said farmhouse.

The story and plot are as scarcely thin as the film's budget – yet, there's something extraordinarily endearing about *Rock 'N' Roll Nightmare*. Its charm will only rest with those who have an appreciation for '80s glam metal, B-movies, and pre-CGI special effects (I use the term 'special' loosely), but those who can get over the stilted acting, vague storyline, and two-dimensional characters will find a fun little horror film. You can do worse than watch *Rock 'N' Roll Nightmare* on a Saturday night – just don't have your expectations set too high.

---Reviewed by Mark Sasahara

BASILISK

Gonzo Digimation; 2005, 24 Episodes. Based on a novel by Futaro Yamada; Cast: Kosuki Toriumi, Nana Mizuki, Sho Hayami.

Romeo and Juliet - Ninja Style.

Gonzo is known as one of the top animation studios in Japan for good reason and *Basilisk* is a testament to their

reputation. *Basilisk* is set in Feudal Japan and tells the tragic tale of two warring ninja clans, the Kouga and the Iga. In true Romeo and Juliet fashion, Gennosuke of the Kouga and Oboro of the Iga are in love – but both clans, who are in the midst of a strained peace treaty, are vehemently

opposed to such a union. When war once again breaks out between the two ninja families, both Gennosuke and Oboro find that their love is put to the test.

Based on the 1958 novel, *The Kouga Ninja Scrolls*, written by Futaro Yamada, *Basilisk* is best described as a mix of '80s ninja cinema tossed in with Marvel's *X-Men*. These aren't your ordinary ninja by any stretch of the imagination. For example, one ninja can reshape his body into a gelatinous blob, there's the typical blind ninja that possesses uncanny skills with a sword, another can use his hair as a deadly weapon, a female ninja has a poisonous kiss, and...well, you get the picture.

The fight scenes are spectacular. The characters' motivations of hate, revenge, desire, and despair are palpable. Even those who are not fond of Japanese anime will find a story here that they can sink their teeth (or ninja swords) into. Many times in anime the action takes precedent over all else, casting the characters and plot aside. This is not the case with *Basilisk*. Each character, and there are many, is fleshed out. Despite the use of ultra-graphic violence in the battle scenes, at the heart of *Basilisk* is a touching love story that may even entice a tear or two.

Basilisk runs 24 episodes and each one is a gripping affair. Fans of dubbed anime will be glad to know that the English dialogue track is handled with the utmost care and the voice actors give an impressive performance. To those who prefer hearing the original Japanese dub, the voice actors are at the top of their game all the way around.

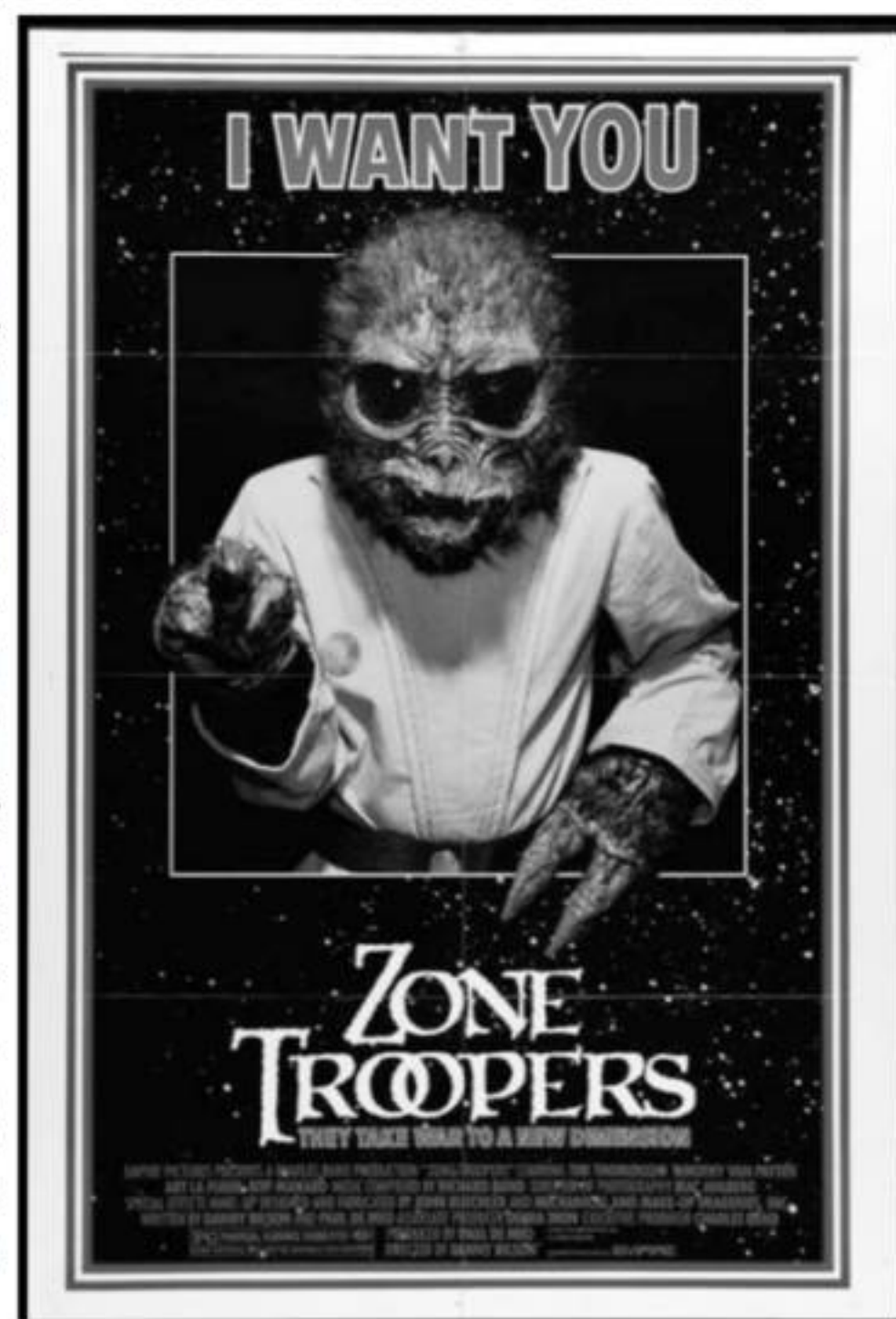
--- Reviewed by Lisa Stilts

ZONE TROOPERS

Empire Pictures; 1986, Running Time: 86 Min., Dir: Danny Bilson, Writers: Paul De Meo & Danny Bilson; Cast: Tim Thomerson, Timothy Van Patten, Art LaFleur.

Find Out If This '80s Sci-Fi Flick Is 'In the Zone'

Don't let the cheesy-sounding name fool you, *Zone Troopers* is an example of unlimited imagination overcoming limited budget. Set in Italy during World War II, the film follows a small unit of American troops caught behind enemy lines. However, when the soldiers stumble upon the crash site



of a UFO, they realize that the stakes are higher than they could have ever imagined – and more dangerous than ever before, as the Nazis close in.

Zone Troopers was produced by Charles Band, the man who would later be responsible for establishing *Full Moon Pictures*. While some of Band's later work (post-*Puppet Master III*) is questionable at best, his early work is light-years above what many independent production companies are producing today. *Zone Troopers* is an enjoyable viewing experience in every regard, from the original storyline, which has a nice fluid pace, to the likeability of the characters, Band produced an admirable sci-fi/action tale. A number of familiar faces abound in *Zone Troopers* that anyone familiar with the B-movie/cult film genre will instantly recognize. Tim Thomerson, well-known for his roles in *Trancers* (1985), *Iron Eagle* (1986), and *Dollman* (1991), fills in as the main character, Sarge. Timothy Van Patten from *Class of 1984* (1982) and veteran character actor, Art LaFleur, both play soldiers in the stranded unit.

Though *Zone Troopers* was Danny Bilson's first directorial effort, it never shows. In fact, he bestows the film with an atmosphere reminiscent of a 1940s/1950s sci-fi comic – and in *Zone Trooper's* case, it suits the theme perfectly. Bilson opts out of making this a serious affair and aims for pure popcorn entertainment. Everything from the alien spacecraft's design to the in-joke comic book references makes *Zone Troopers* more than just a novelty, low-grade science-fiction film – it makes *Zone Troopers* a memorable romp that appears to have been crafted with care and heart, something many of the artificial, big-budget, lavishly produced sci-fi blockbusters today seem to be lacking. If, even for a second, you consider yourself a sci-fi fan, you owe it to yourself to sit down, grab a bowl of popcorn, and watch *Zone Troopers*.

--- Reviewed by Stan Fuller

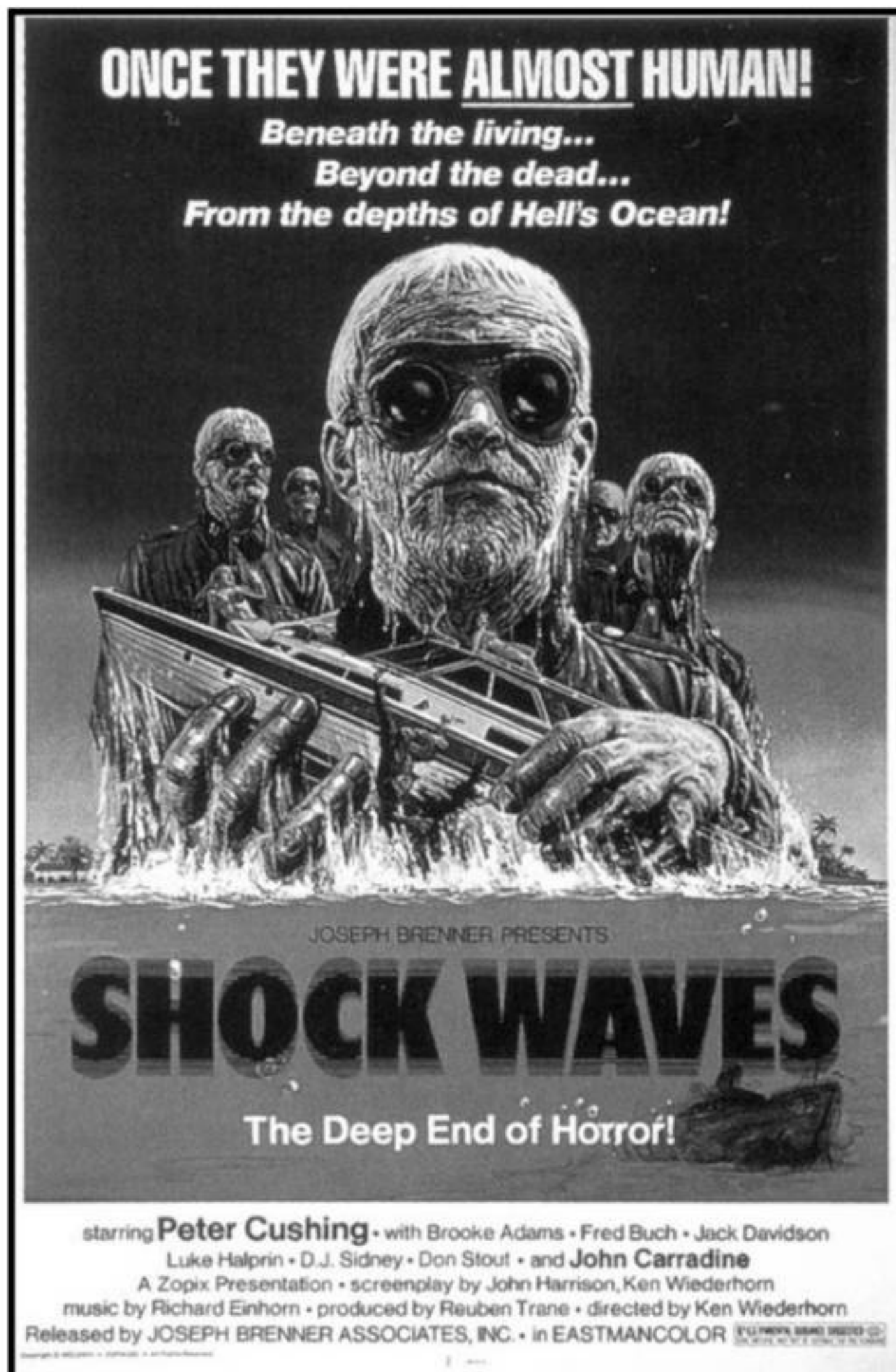
SHOCK WAVES

Zopix Company; 1977, Running Time: 85 Min., Dir: Ken Wiederhorn, Writers: John Kent Harrison, Ken Pare, Ken Wiederhorn; Cast: Peter Cushing, John Carradine, Brooke Adams.

To Be or Nazi Be

Nazis and zombies. It's a winning formula. You take a classic bad guy, the Nazi, and make them even worse by casting them among the ranks of 'living undead'. Ken Wiederhorn's *Shock Waves* was one of the first films to introduce the genre to this new amalgamation.

When a yacht full of vacationers collides with a deserted ghost ship, their only refuge is a desolate island inhabited by an SS commander, played by the always remarkable Peter Cushing. The vacationers soon learn that the island is also occupied by *The Toten Corps*, the horrific result of a Nazi experiment to turn SS troops into indestructible super-soldiers – aka *zombies*. Needless to say, this wasn't the type of relaxed getaway the vacationers had hoped for when they signed on for their yacht cruise. Soon they find themselves in a life and death struggle against an army of Hitler's horrors!



Shock Waves borders between good and not-so-good, but never bad. There seems to be a number of instances where footage was cut from the film. What was up with the sky turning orange before the appearance of the ghost ship? Once on the island, what happened to the vacationers' boat? Whatever the case, while these strange moments may take away from a few scenes, they fail to take away from the overall film.

The combined presence of Peter Cushing and John Carradine aids *Shock Waves* significantly. It should be said that the Nazi zombies differ from the average zombie portrayal in the sense that these reanimated corpses don't eat flesh. No cannibalism and brain munching here. Instead, the zombies are simply content to drown their victims. One of the most striking and memorable scenes in the film is when *The Toten Corps* rise up from the water for the first time. One could argue that it's one of the greatest 'entrance scenes' for a zombie in the whole of the genre.

Shock Waves set the bar for Nazi zombie films and it's a bar that still hasn't been surpassed. Fans of Wiederhorn's classic may want to check out *Zombie Lake* (1981) *Oasis of the Zombies* (1983) and *Dead Snow* (2009), all of which feature more zombified SS troops.

--- Reviewed by Chris Nelson

THE ART OF HAMMER: THE OFFICIAL POSTER COLLECTION FROM THE ARCHIVE OF HAMMER FILMS

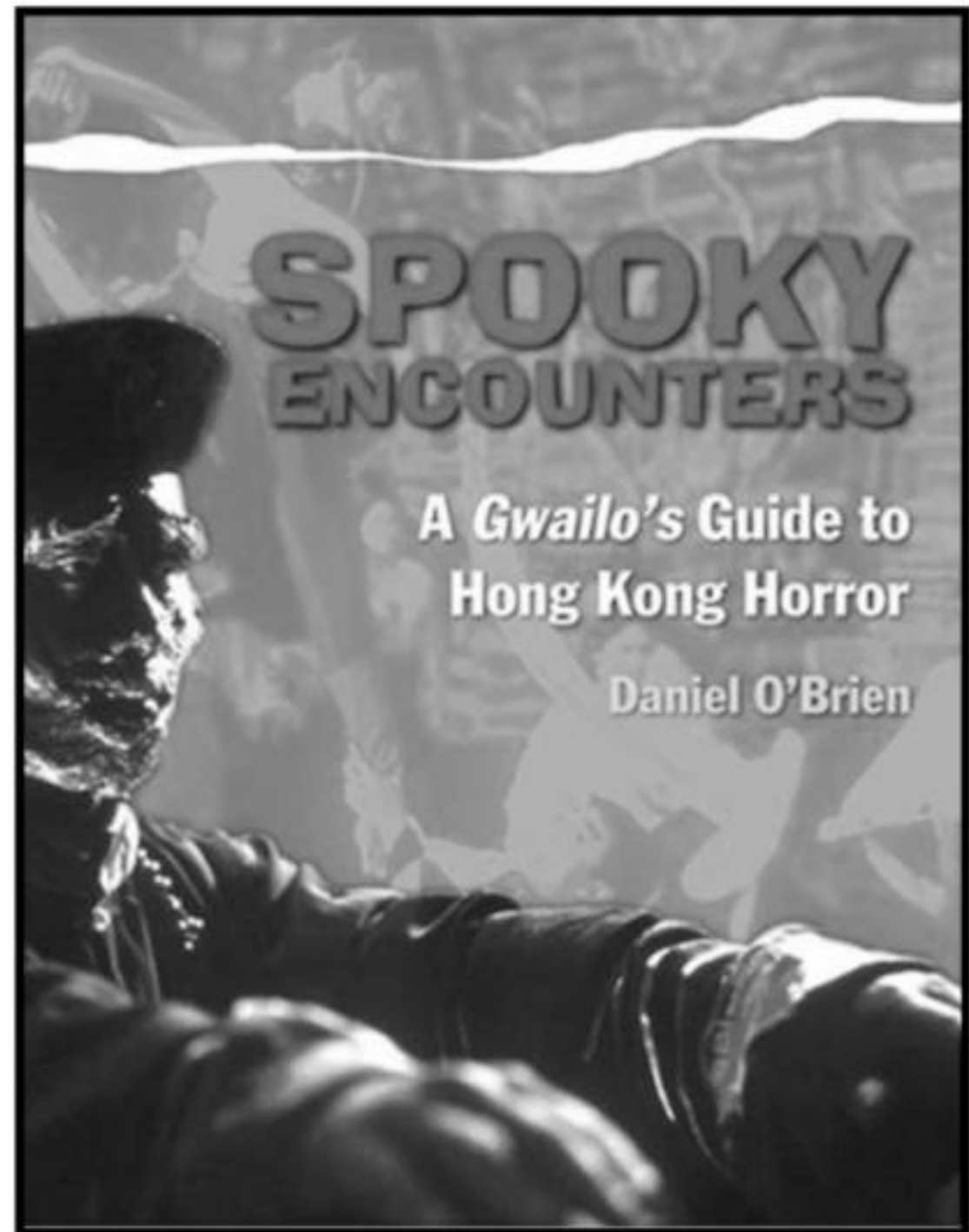
Titan Books; 2010, 192 pages., Author: Marcus Hearn.

A Visual Look into the House That Dripped Blood

Gore, violence, and sex – nobody did it better than Hammer Films. Bringing their unique spin on the classic Universal Monsters, Hammer delivered film after bloodcurdling film, starring screen legends like Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. *The Art of Hammer* showcases the UK film studio's most popular theatrical posters with the respect they rightfully deserve. Everything including *Curse of Frankenstein*, *Brides of Dracula*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Devil Rides Out*, *Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires*, to *Shatter* are all here, as are so many more, in vivid color and on glossy paper.

Marcus Hearn and Titus Books have truly given Hammer fans and movie poster enthusiasts a treat with the *Art of Hammer*. Nearly each one of the book's 192 pages features artwork that will be sure to keep one's attention hooked for quite some time. An amazing gaze back at how studios used to promote their films! In short, this is a must have. Titus is also responsible for the equally worthwhile *Hammer Glamour* and *The Hammer Story*.

--- Reviewed by Scott Clark



SPOOKY ENCOUNTERS: A GWAILO'S GUIDE TO HONG KONG HORROR

Critical Vision Publishing; 2003, 192 pages., Author: Daniel O'Brien.

Hopping Vampires, Flying Ghosts, and Seductive Spirits – We're Not In Hollywood Anymore, Toto!

For anyone not familiar with Hong Kong cinema, the sight of a hopping vampire might be a bit...peculiar. The very *sound* of it might have the casual Western viewer scratching his or her head. Fret not, because Daniel O'Brien's *Spooky Encounters: A Gwailo's Guide to Hong Kong Horror* will guide you to the light. Of course, if the blending of awe-inspiring martial arts, uproarious slapstick comedy, and atmospheric horror just isn't your bag, by all means, read no further. But, if your interest has been peaked; even only a tad, then O'Brien's book is for you. In my humblest of opinions, I truly believe that everyone really needs to experience at least one Hong Kong film complete with a hopping vampire, Taoist one-eyebrowed priest, living skeleton, tree demon, and sexy sorceress. And typically, any *one* of the films in this genre has *everything* that I just mentioned. Yeah, it's *that* bizarre.

Spooky Encounters serves as both an eye-opening primer for the uninitiated and as an excellent reference guide for the dedicated aficionado. O'Brien covers nearly every aspect of Hong Kong horror, including genre classics: *Encounters of the Spooky Kind*, *Mr. Vampire*, *A Chinese Ghost Story*, and innumerable more titles that may be foreign to Westerners' ears. One would be hard pressed to find a better, more exhaustive digest of information on this strange subject than in O'Brien's book and, as a self-proclaimed enthusiast of the material myself, I have yet to find one. Worth a read and many possible re-reads!

--- Reviewed by Stan Fuller

CAPTAIN AMERICA

